Arkadij Naiditsch
Csaba Balogh

Most interesting
draws of 2012–2015

Caruana vs Gelfand

33... ♖e3!!

Chess Evolution

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

Key to symbols

Introduction

Editorial preface

GAME 1 A. Naumann (2546) – R. Rapport (2547)

GAME 2 A. Volokitin (2695) – B. Jobava (2704)

GAME 3 Yifan Hou (2639) – F. Caruana (2767)

GAME 4 V. Anand (2817) – P. Eljanov (2683)

GAME 5 P. Svidler (2744) – A. Morozevich (2765)

GAME 6 L. Aronian – V. Kramnik

GAME 7 L. Aronian (2825) – A. Grischuk (2761)

GAME 8 A. Naiditsch (2700) – P. Leko (2730)

GAME 9 P. Svidler (2749) – N. Vitiugov (2705)

GAME 10 A. Shirov (2718) – R. Appel (2525)

GAME 11 L.J. McShane (2713) – A. Volokitin (2724)

GAME 12 B. Gelfand (2740) – V. Kramnik (2810)

GAME 13 P. Svidler (2747) – A. Grischuk (2764)

GAME 14 A. Morozevich (2760) – Hi Nakamura (2775)

GAME 15 A. Grischuk (2779) – L. Dominguez Perez (2723)

GAME 16 F. Caruana (2774) – V. Kramnik (2803)

GAME 17 S. Mamedyarov (2753) – M. Carlsen (2864)

GAME 18 S. Karjakin (2782) – V. Anand (2786)

GAME 19 S. Karjakin (2776) – A. Grischuk (2780)

GAME 20 P. Leko (2737) – G. Kamsky (2763)

GAME 21 D. Andreikin (2716) – V. Kramnik (2784)

GAME 22 G. Kamsky (2741) – H. Nakamura (2772)

GAME 23 H. Nakamura (2772) – E. Tomashevsky (2703)

GAME 24 V. Kramnik (2793) – L. Aronian (2801)

GAME 25 B. Amin (2652) – N. Vitiugov (2741)

GAME 26 H. Nakamura (2789) – S. Karjakin (2759)

GAME 27 V. Ivanchuk (2739) – M. Vachier-Lagrave (2745)

GAME 28 V. Anand (2770) – D. Andreikin (2709)

GAME 29 D. Wagner (2481) – A. Shirov (2685)

GAME 30 J. Nepomniachtchi (2732) – P. Svidler (2756)

GAME 31 I. Sokolov (2650) – D. Navara (2708)

GAME 32 M. Carlsen (2881) – A. Giri (2752)

GAME 33 P. Svidler (2753) – M. Carlsen (2881)

GAME 34 B. Savchenko (2596) – R . Rapport (2704)

GAME 35 M. Vachier-Lagrave (2768) – M. Carlsen (2877)

GAME 36 D. Svetushkin (2580) – Y. Kryvoruchko (2708)

GAME 37 F. Caruana (2844) – B. Gelfand (2748)

GAME 38 T. Radjabov (2726) – L. Dominguez Perez (2751)

GAME 39 S. Mamedyarov (2764) – H. Nakamura (2764)

GAME 40 B. Gelfand (2748) – M. Vachier-Lagrave (2757)

GAME 41 S. Mamedyarov (2764) – S. Karjakin (2767)

GAME 42 B. Jobava (2717) – S. Mamedyarov (2764)

GAME 43 A. Korobov (2680) – V. Ivanchuk (2726)

GAME 44 G. Kasparov (2812) – N. Short (2664)

GAME 45 M. Vachier-Lagrave (2754) – B. Gelfand (2744)

GAME 46 S. Karjakin (2753) – B. Jobava (2699)

GAME 47 R. Rapport (2671) – M. Adams (2740)

GAME 48 I. Bukavshin (2655) – I. Lysyj (2673)

GAME 49 N. Vitiugov (2719) – D. Dubov (2654)

GAME 50 F. Caruana (2808) – W. So (2779)

Swipe left for next chapter

Arkadij Naiditsch
Csaba Balogh

Most interesting draws of 2012–2015

Cover designer
Piotr Pielach

Typesetting
Piotr Pielach ‹www.i-press.pl›

First edition 2016 by Chess Evolution

Most interesting draws of 2012–2015

Copyright © 2016 Chess Evolution

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

ISBN 978-83-944290-0-3

All sales or enquiries should be directed to Chess Evolution
ul. Smutna 5a, 32-005 Niepolomice, Poland

e-mail: info@chess-evolution.com
website: www.chess-evolution.com

Printed in Poland

KEY TO SYMBOLS

= Equality or equal chances

⩲ White has a slight advantage

⩱ Black has a slight advantage

± White is better

∓ Black is better

+- White has a decisive advantage

-+ Black has a decisive advantage

∞ unclear

⩯ with compensation

⇄ with counterplay

↑ with initiative

→ with an attack

∆ with the idea

□ only move

N novelty

! a good move

!! an excellent move

? a weak move

?? a blunder

!? an interesing move

?! a dubious move

+ check

mate

INTRODUCTION

Useful information for our valued readers.

››› The book contains the 50 most interesting draws from 2012 to 2015.

››› The games were selected and analyzed by the authors GM Arkadij Naiditsch and GM Csaba Balogh.

››› Most of the games are taken from the highest-level tournaments, such as Wijk aan Zee, FIDE Grand Prix series, Olympiads etc.

››› Most of the games are played by top Grandmasters: Carlsen, Anand, Kramnik, Aronian, Caruana and many, many more of the world’s best chess-players.

››› The games are sorted in chronological order, from 2012 through to 2015.

EDITORIAL PREFACE

We are proud to present our second book in a series of 5 — “Most interesting draws of 2012–2015”.

It was very interesting work trying to select and analyse the 50 most interesting draws from the past 4 years: the choice was so wide! We were aiming to find the most exciting, spectacular and, of course, useful attacking ideas which might also occur in our own practical games.

The main idea behind this book stands out clearly: We try to reduce the importance of opening theory, and rather get inside the workings of the best chess-playing brains on the planet in an attempt to explain the most complex attacking ideas in a simple and understandable way to any chess lover.

Another very important point of the book which we are proud of is, we have not used much ’engine’ assistance during our commentary on the games. We try to see the game the way we would do in a practical game, which makes the commentaries very special — which in practice puts the reader fully in the shoes of the world-class players; this is exactly the best way to improve our own chess level.

Sadly, nowadays, we have more-and-more computer analyses and we can hear chess amateurs judging the play even of Carlsen. Yes, you can find tactical mistakes with an engine at home — but the question is, can you do the same during your practical game over the board ?! Chess is a game where everyone is making mistakes — and this is what it is all about in the current book!

We would advise all our readers to take out a real chessboard and enjoy these beautiful masterpieces. This is how we learned to play chess and this is why we still enjoy every wonderful game, even after almost 20 years of being professional chess players!

Yours,
Arkadij Naiditsch & Csaba Balogh

GAME 1
A. Naumann (2546)
R. Rapport (2547)
Schachbundesliga 2011/2012 (11)
26.02.2012, [E62]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

After checking through numerous games, Arkadij and I agreed without any doubts that the following game was the best of the week. The White player, Alexander Naumann, is a solid GM from Germany while Black is the 2nd youngest grandmaster in the world, Richard Rapport! At the time he was Hungary's top prodigy, and only 16 years old. In a very complicated and difficult middlegame, both players found the strongest moves and the game finished with a spectacular perpetual check. Let's get it on!

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♘c3

The starting position of the King's Indian Defence, 4.g3 system. Black has many different setups, of which the main move is 7...a6, with the same idea as the text move- preparing for queenside action with b5.

7...♖b8 8.h3

After preventing ♗g4, White wants to occupy the center with e4. 8.e4 ♗g4

8...♗f5

A very rare move! According to my database, it has been tried only 9 times before. The idea is simply to stop e4. The main move is 8...a6 9.e4 b5 with very long theoretical lines, and hundreds of games.

9.d5 ♘a5 10.♘d2

A logical reaction by White. He sends the knight to the edge of the board, where in general it is poorly placed, and at the same time he wants to push e4 with tempo.

10...c5!

Black prepares for a counterattack on the queenside with a6 and b5 and tries to find a role for his knight on a5.

11.e4 ♗d7 12.♕c2 a6 13.b3!

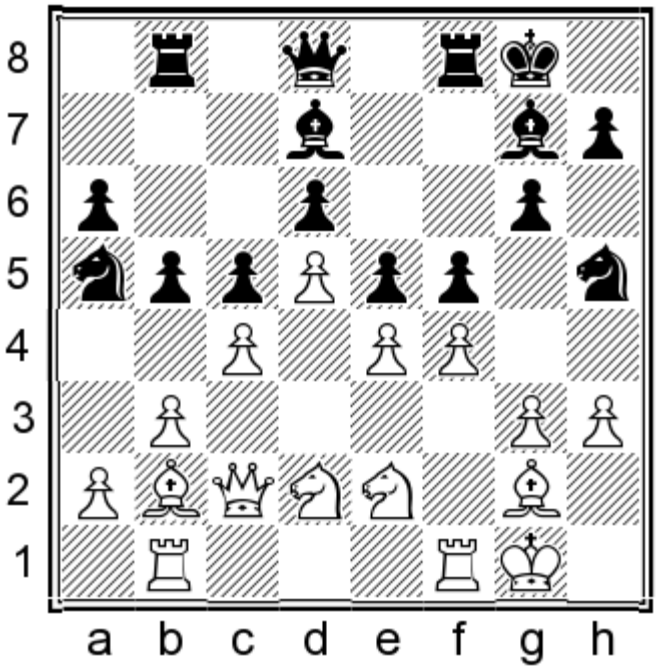
For White it is necessary to hold the c4 pawn. If Black could force him to take on b5, then he would achieve a big advantage. However, if White manages to keep his structure intact, then the a5 knight will be out of the game forever.

13...b5 14.♖b1 ♘h5 15.♗b2 e5!

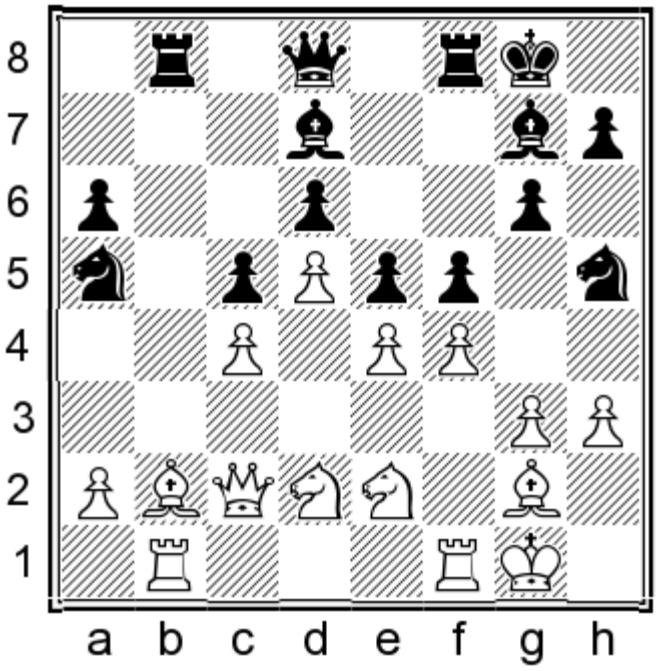
After White successfully stabilizes the queenside pawn structure, Black is forced to find another plan. Rapport finds an excellent way to do this, he organizes play on the kingside.

16.♘e2 f5! 17.f4!

The tension has grown to the maximum! All the pawns and pieces are prepared for battle, so it is time for immediate action!



17...bxc4 18.bxc4



18...♖xb2!!

A fantastic, intuitive exchange sacrifice by Rapport! He wants to clarify the situation and opens up the center for his bishops, in order to lunch a mating attack. The value of the King's Indian bishop on g7 will be much higher than the rook on b2.

19.♖xb2 exf4 20.gxf4 fxe4 21.♘xe4 ♕h4!?

Black could have restored material equality- 21...♗xb2 22.♕xb2 would lead to more or less balanced position in both

lines 22...♕e7 (*22...♘xc4 23.♕c3 ♘b6 24.♘xd6*) 23.♕c3 — but he prefers to save his bishop for the attack!

22.♖bb1

Naumann tries to save his exchange advantage for the future, but in doing so he hands an important tempo to his opponent.

22...♗xh3 23.♗xh3 ♕xh3

Only the a5 knight seems to be out of the game but it has a very important role to play, preventing White from playing ♖b3 bringing an important defender towards his king.

24.♖f2!

The only move! White tries to protect the king.

24...♕e3!?

A very talented and resourceful idea. He had to foresee his 26th move, and also the consequences of it.

25.♔g2

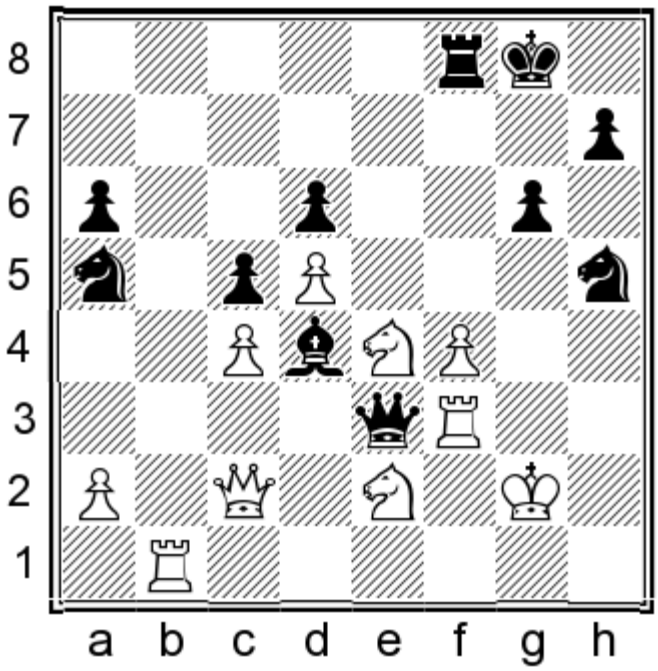
White threatens to trap the queen with ♖f3, however Rapport had this idea in mind.

25...♗d4!

25...♘xf4+? 26.♘xf4 ♖xf4 27.♖b8+ suddenly Black's king would be in danger

26.♖f3

It seems as though Black could resign here, but...

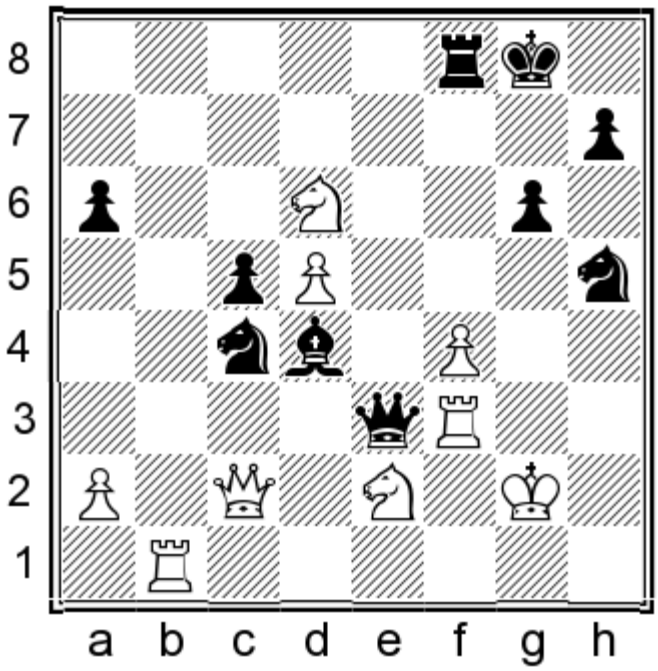


26...♘xc4!!

Lightning from a clear sky! White cannot accept any of the hanging pieces because he would lose more material. However, he also comes up with a brilliant counter-idea!

27.♘xd6!!

Naumann tries to lure the knight away, after which the queen could be taken. Meanwhile, he threatens to take on c4 with both pieces, since e4 is not hanging anymore. So, Black needs to act urgently!



27.♕xc4? ♕xe4–+;

27.♖xe3?? ♘xe3+–+

27...♖xf4!!

Amazing! Another sacrifice!! Let's count: from White's point of view, his rook and knight are hanging, while on the other side queen, rook, and knight are in the air.

28.♘xf4!

White chooses to take the correct piece!

28...♘xf4+ 29.♖xf4 ♕xf4 30.♘xc4 ♕g4+!

And after plenty of only moves by both sides, White ends up with an extra rook, but Black can give perpetual check with the co-operation of his remaining pieces.

31.♔h2

31.♔f1 White cannot escape this way 31...♕g1+ 32.♔e2 ♕f2+ 33.♔d1 ♕f1+ 34.♔d2 ♕f2+ 35.♔c1 (*35.♔d3 ♕f5*±) 35...♕e1+ 36.♕d1 ♕c3+ 37.♕c2=

31...♕h4+ 32.♔g2 ♕g4+ 33.♔h2 ♕h4+ 34.♔g2 ♕g4+

Draw! A very exciting game, where both players deserved to get the full point: unfortunately impossible so they had to share it. My experience shows that in games likes this, strangely, when all the pieces are hanging there is a very high percentage for draws. But in any case a fantastic game, truly deserving to win the title game of the month!

1/2

GAME 2
A. Volokitin (2695)
B. Jobava (2704)
1. Bundesliga 2011/2012 (4)
01.03.2012, [B12]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

This game was played between two great fighters, the Ukrainian GM Andrei Volokitin, and the Georgian GM Baadur Jobava. Both players like tactical struggles, so we could expect a very sharp duel. Straight out of the opening the game entered into unreal complications, where both players could use their abilities! After a very impressive battle, the position was simplified to a drawish endgame. Let's see the details from this exciting encounter.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♗e2

Lately the most popular setup against the Caro-Kann Defence, both players are considered to be big experts in this variation.

5...c5 6.♗e3 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘e7 8.♘d2 ♘bc6 9.♘2f3 ♗e4 10.0-0

Up to this point there are plenty of games in the database, but here Black tries a really fresh idea, which has been played only once before.

10...♕d7!?

Black's problem is his king, which is stuck in the center. White wants to play c4 now, or in the near future, to open up the position. In general, the complications favour him. Therefore, Black's plan is to prepare for the fight in the center and bring his rook to d8, which could be very useful.

11.c4

Volokitin plays in his style, and enters the complications. It would also be interesting to see Jobava's improvement on a previous game, where Bologan played in positional fashion and easily outplayed his opponent. 11.♖c1 ♖d8 12.c3 ♗xf3 (*12...♘g6* could hardly be Jobava's idea, since after *13.♘g5 ♘gxe5 14.f4 ♘g6 15.♘xe4 dxe4 16.f5 exf5 17.♘xf5* White gets very strong compensation for the sacrificed pawn.) 13.♘xf3 ♘g6 14.♕b3 ♘gxe5 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5 16.♗xa7 and White was slightly better, thanks to the pair of bishops in Bologan-Krush, Gibraltar 2012.

11...♖d8 12.♘b5!

White finds the most challenging move! He has to act urgently, before Black finishes development, so creates the double threat of ♘d6 and ♘xa7.

12...♘f5

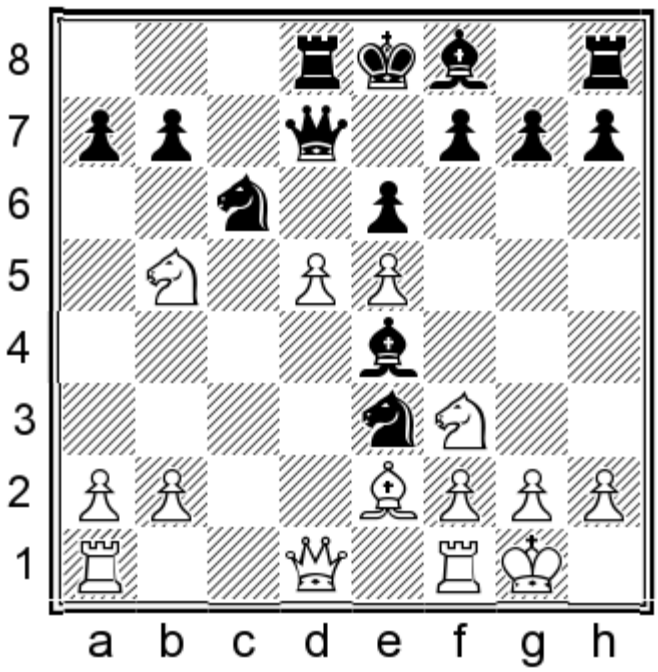
Jobava gives up a pawn for activity! Passive defence with 12...♘c8 would lead to a nice advantage for White after 13.♘g5! a6 14.♘xe4 dxe4 (*14...axb5 15.cxd5 ♕xd5 16.♕c2 ♕xe5 17.♖ad1*± and ♘c5 is coming the next move, when

Black will be punished for being undeveloped.) 15.♘c3 ♘xe5 16.♘xe4.

13.cxd5!

The immediate 13.♗xa7 would lead to very strong compensation for Black after 13...♘xa7 14.♘xa7 ♗c5 15.♘b5 0-0.

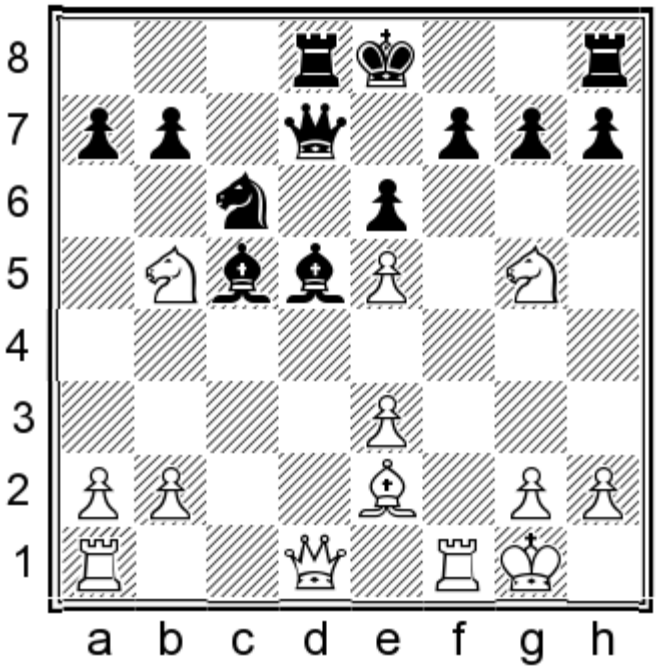
13...♘xe3



However, on 13...♗xd5 White can already take the pawn with 14.♗xa7 since after 14...♘xa7 15.♘xa7 he has the highly unpleasant threat of ♗b5!

14.dxc6!?

After long calculation, Volokition chooses the most concrete approach. However, I think it was better to playthe simple 14.fxe3! to open the f-file for the rook, and launch an attack against the f7 square 14...♗xd5 15.♘g5! ♘xe5 (15...♗c5

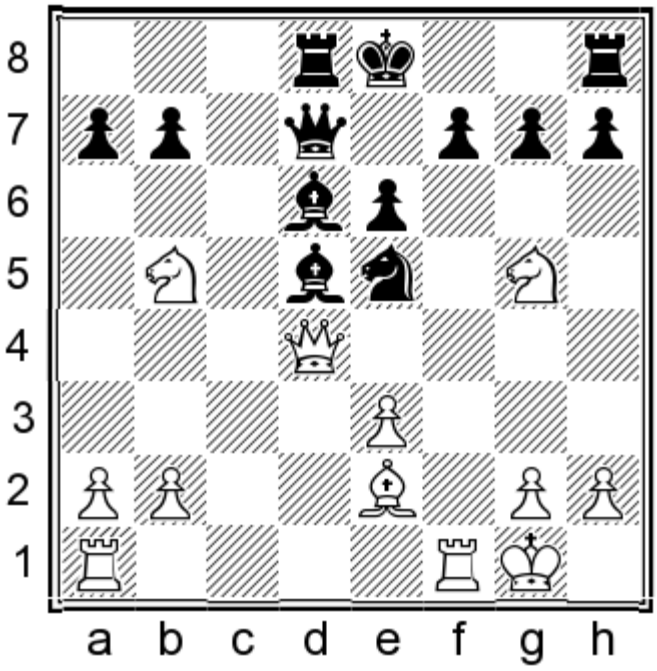


16.♕c1! defends and attacks in the same time!

(on *16.♘xf7* Black has a nice response with *16...♗xe3+ 17.♔h1 ♕xf7! 18.♖xf7 ♗xg2+ 19.♔xg2 ♖xd1 20.♖xd1 ♔xf7 21.♖d7+ ♔g6*=)

16...♕e7 17.♘xf7 0-0 18.♘xd8 ♖xd8 19.♘c3±)

16.♕d4! Black's position is falling apart and the main line is beautiful! 16...♗d6

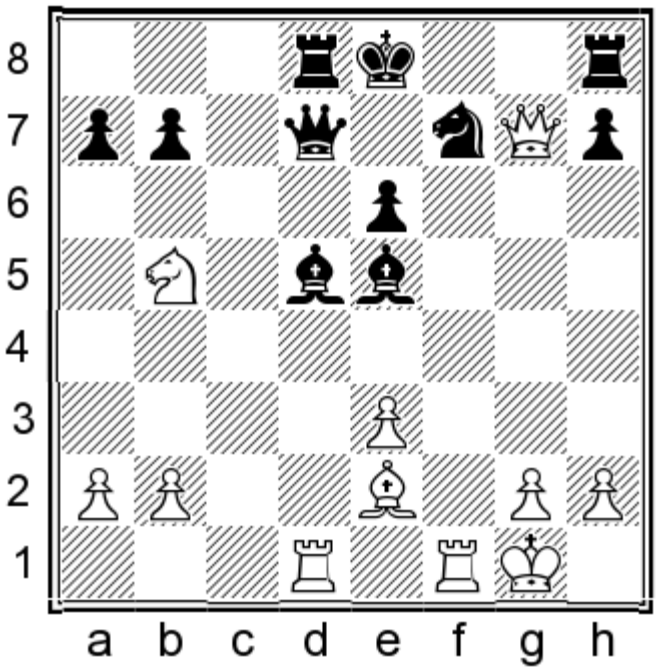


(*16...♘c6 17.♕c3±; 16...f6 17.♗h5+! g6 18.♖xf6!+–*)

17.♖ad1! a very difficult move to find, but the idea is simple; White wants to push e4 and win a piece. 17...♗b8

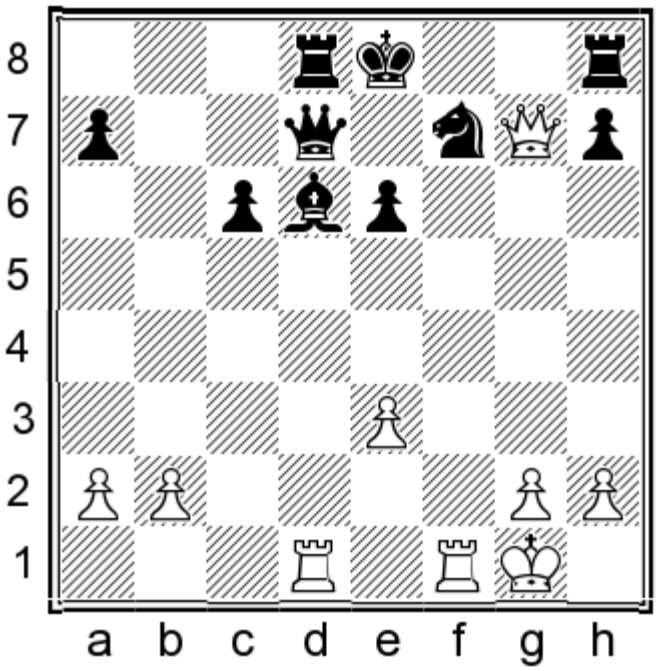
(*17...0-0 18.♘xd6 ♕xd6 19.e4*±)

18.♘xf7!! ♘xf7 19.♕xg7 ♗e5



(*19...♖f8 20.♗h5+–*)

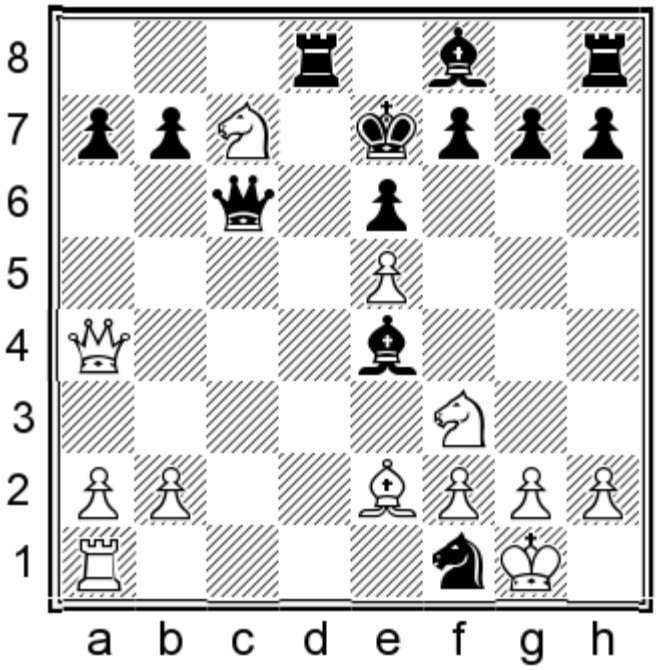
20.♘d6+!! A fantastic sacrifice! The kamikadze knight! 20...♗xd6 21.♗b5!! ♗c6 22.♗xc6 bxc6



23.♖xd6!! as in ‘giveaway chess’. :) 23...♘xd6 24.♕xh8+ ♔e7 25.♕f6+ ♔e8 26.♕f8#

14...♕xd1!

14...♕xc6 would be a mistake because of 15.♕a4! ♘xf1 16.♘c7+! ♔e7



(*16...♔d7 17.♗b5+–*)

17.♗b5! ♕c5

(*17...♕xc7 18.♕b4++–*)

18.♖c1! ♕xc1 19.♕b4++–

15.♖fxd1 ♘xd1 16.c7!

This was the point of the 14th move!

16...♘xb2!?

Jobava prefers to give up the rook and save his knight, in order to get rid of the dangerous c7 pawn. 16...♖c8 17.♖xd1 ♗d5 18.♘d6+ ♗xd6 19.exd6 ♔d7 20.♘e5+ ♔xd6 21.♘xf7+ ♔xc7 22.♘xh8 ♖xh8= would lead to equality.

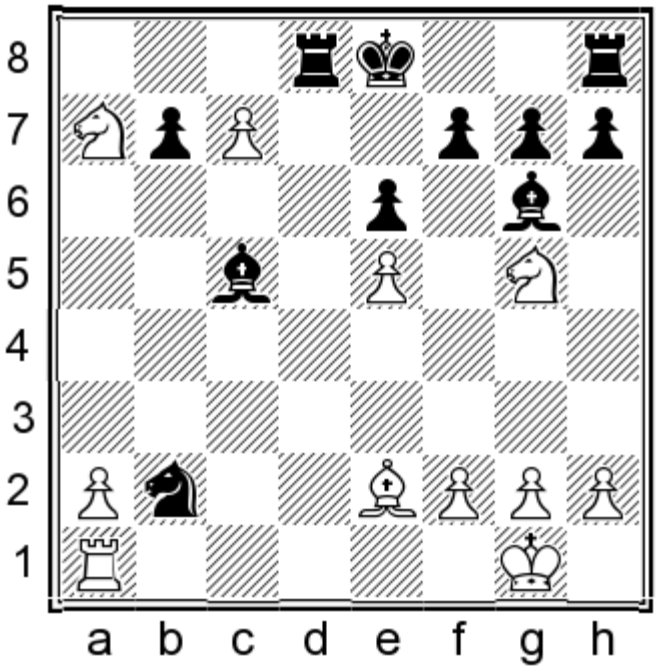
17.♘g5!?

over the next few moves, White simply ignores the rook. 17.♘xa7 ♗xf3 18.♗xf3 ♗c5 19.cxd8=♕+ ♔xd8=

17...♗g6 18.♘xa7!?

Volokitin sets an amazing trap, but Black finds the only moves to survive!

18...♗c5!



19.♖c1!

This is the point, and seems like White is winning, but Jobava finds a very nice way to survive.

19...♘a4!

The only move! 19...♗xa7 20.c8=♕!± instead of taking the rook, he promotes to a queen, and so h8 is also falling.

20.cxd8=♕+

Finally, he took it! 20.♗b5+ ♔e7 21.cxd8=♕+ ♖xd8 22.♗xa4 ♗xa7∓

20...♔xd8 21.♘b5 b6

The position has simplified and resulted in an even situation.

22.h4

Volokitin doesn't give up the fight for the advantage and finds a very nice trick. However, Jobava does not fall for it and finds the best defence yet again!

22...h6!

22...h5 23.♗d1! ♘b2 24.♗c2! this is the idea of his 22nd move. 24...♔e7 25.♗xg6 and Black cannot take back with the h-pawn. 25...fxg6 26.♖c3↑ White could still hope for some initiative.

23.h5! ♗xh5 24.♘xe6+ fxe6 25.♗xh5 ♔e7 26.♖c4 ♘b2 27.♖f4 ♖f8 28.♖xf8 ♔xf8

and after plenty of precise moves by both sides, the position became a dead draw. The fight continued, but the rest is not interesting because of the opposite-colored bishops.

29.♗e2 ♔e7 30.g3 g5 31.♔g2 h5 32.♘c3 h4 33.♘e4 hxg3 34.fxg3 ♗d4 35.♘xg5 ♗xe5 36.♗g4 ♘a4 37.♗xe6 ♔f6

38.♗b3 ♔xg5 39.♗xa4 ♗d4

Draw agreed! A very interesting game, full of beautiful ideas! Both players deserve congratulations!

1/2

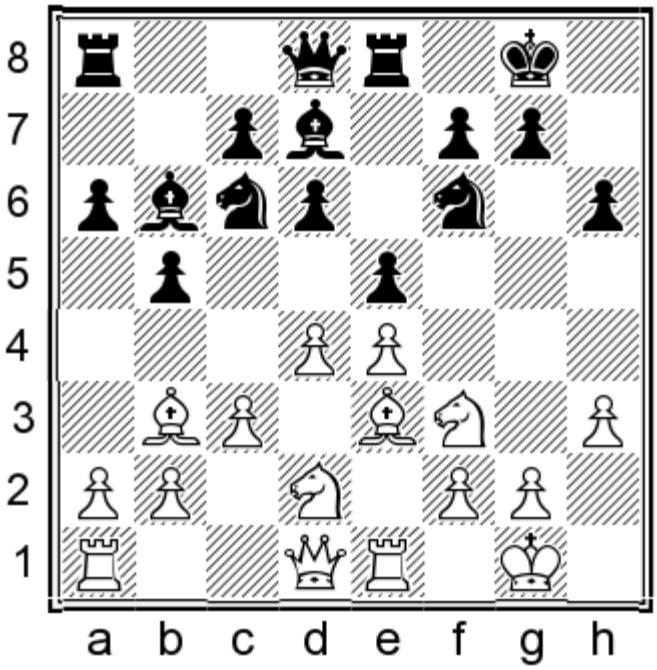
GAME 3
Yifan Hou (2639)
F. Caruana (2767)
Reykjavik Open 2012 Reykjavik
13.03.2012, [C78]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

The following was the critical game of the Reykjavik Open! In the final round Fabiano Caruana held a half-point advantage, but he had to face Hou Yifan — and we already know how dangerous she is. In an interesting battle in Ruy Lopez, the Women World Champion outplays the Nr. 7 in the World in a complex middlegame, but at the last moment she fails to convert the decisive advantage into a full point.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 b5 6.♗b3 ♗c5

This is the Modern Arkhangelsk Defense, which lately has become very popular.

7.c3 d6 8.d4 ♗b6 9.h3 0-0 10.♗e3 h6 11.♘bd2 ♖e8 12.♖e1 ♗d7



13.♕b1

Until this moment the players are following the Navara-Caruana game from Wijk aan Zee, 2012, which continued with 13.♗c2. Hou Yifan tries an interesting novelty. White had to protect the e4 pawn, and we will soon understand the big plus of the game move compared to Navara's idea in the 13...♕b8 line.

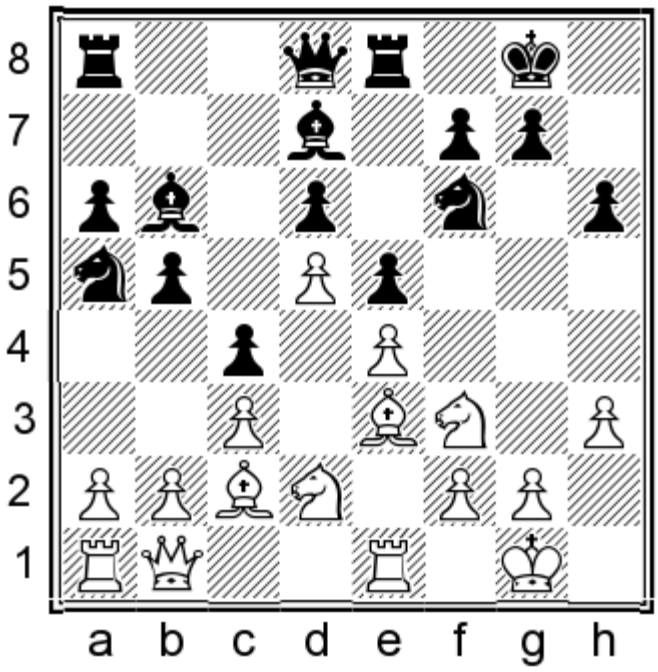
13...♘a5

13...♕b8 This is the standard plan for Black; Caruana played it in the game mentioned. He transfers his queen to b7 to put the e4 pawn under pressure, and tries to invite White to push d5. It would be a big achievement for Black to provoke this move because after moving the knight, he could play c6 and obtain a perfect position. This is the whole idea behind Black's concept. 14.a3! And here we get the point of the 13th move, White does not want to depart the a2-g8 diagonal with the bishop. 14...♕b7 (*14...♘a5 15.♗a2 c5 16.b4*±) 15.♕d3 it seems that White's chances are slightly preferable.

14.♗c2 c5

This is another typical plan in the Ruy Lopez, but now White can happily play d5, since he does not need to worry about ...c6 undermining the center.

15.d5 c4



16.b4!

White plays on the queenside where he is better and has more space, thanks to the d5 pawn.

16...cxb3

16...♘b7 17.a4 Here Black has serious problem with the terrible b7 "Ruy Lopez knight", which has no future.

17.axb3 ♗xe3 18.♖xe3 ♘b7 19.b4!

White achieved a small advantage from the opening. He has a clear plan on the queenside, with ♗d3 and c4, while Black's only chance to create counterplay is on the kingside by playing on f5. Of course, to prepare this will take some time, and also it won't be so effective with the poor knight not contributing on b7.

19...♘h5

19...a5 White would not touch this pawn since that would bring back the knight into the game... 20.♗d3! ♕c7 21.♗f1

20.♗d3! ♘f4 21.♗f1 ♖f8 22.c4!

Both players have followed their plans and now the game becomes a more concrete fight with many interesting ideas.

22...bxc4

22...f5 would be a mistake because Black loses his important central pawn. 23.c5! dxc5 24.♘xe5

23.♗xc4

White protects the d5 pawn (after f5 it might be weak), and attacks the a6 weakness, but on the other hand he gives Black a chance to get rid of it. In my opinion it was better to take 23.♘xc4 f5 (*23...♗b5 24.♘fd2*) 24.♖ea3 fxe4 25.♕xe4 ♗f5 26.♕e1 exchanging the d5 pawn for a6, but even after that d6 remains weak, the b7 knight is still terrible and White has a dangerous b4 passed pawn for the future, which guarantees an advantage.

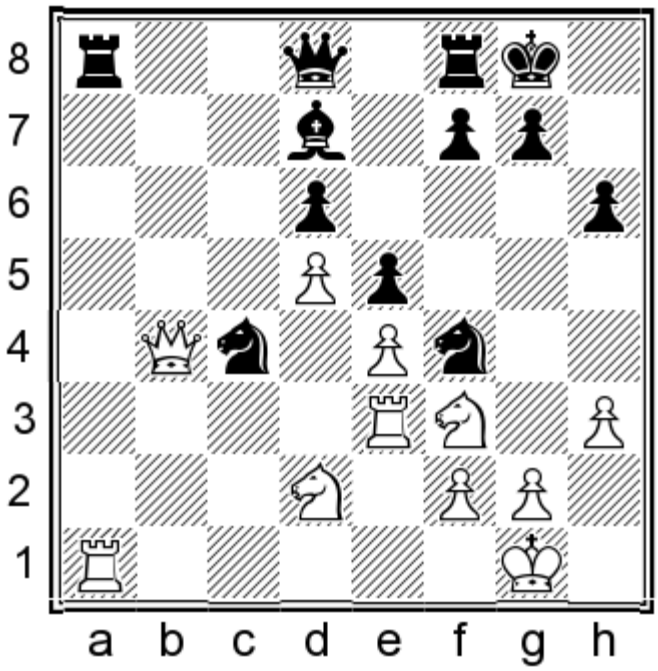
23...a5!

23...♗b5 24.♖ea3

24.bxa5 ♘xa5 25.♕b4

Black has failed to solve all of his problems; the d6 pawn still causes him a lot of headaches.

25...♘xc4



25...♘xg2!? Trying to use the pin on the a-file, Black had an interesting piece sacrifice to complicate matters. 26.♖ea3! (*26.♔xg2? ♘xc4 27.♖xa8 ♘xe3+* check!) 26...♗xh3 (*26...♘f4 27.♖xa5 ♖xa5 28.♕xa5 ♕f6 29.♔h1 ♗xh3 30.♖g1* followed by ♘h2. Black should not have enough compensation here...) 27.♖xa5 ♖xa5 28.♕xa5 ♕d7 29.♖a3! and ♘h2 next move.

26.♖xa8 ♕xa8 27.♘xc4 ♕a1+

Caruana has no way of saving his d6 pawn, so is looking for counterplay around his opponent's king.

28.♖e1

28.♔h2? ♕f1!

28...♕a2 29.♘fd2!

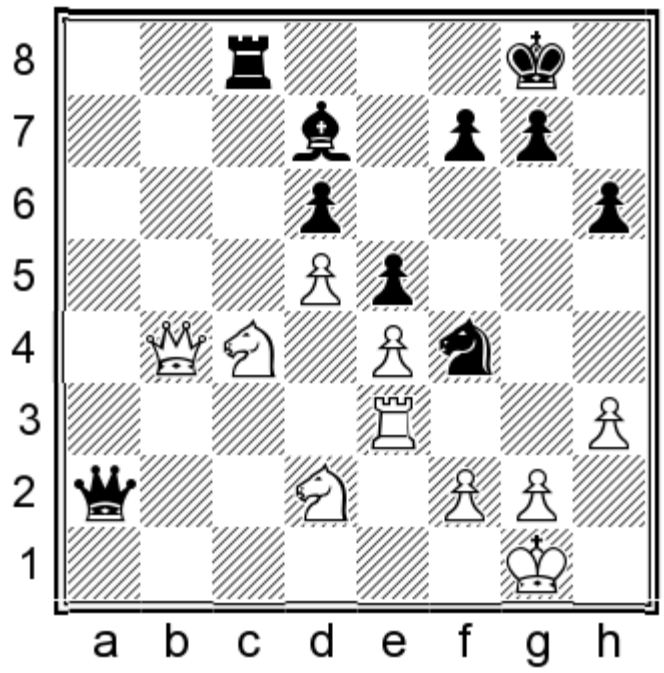
Consolidating the pieces, using the fact that ♘d3 is not a real threat. 29.♕xd6 ♘d3! (*29...♕xc4 30.♕xd7; 29...♗xh3 30.♘e3!*±) 30.♖d1 ♕c2! 31.♖xd3 ♕xd3 32.♘fxe5 ♕b1+ 33.♔h2 ♗b5 would be very unclear.

29...♖c8!

Very strong play by the World Nr.7; with each move he prepares different trick against capturing on d6... 29...♘d3? 30.♕b1!±

30.♖e3

To control the d3 square.



30.♕xd6? did not work because of 30...♗b5! and 30.♘xd6? also fails, to 30...♘d3 31.♕b1 ♕xd2

30...♕c2!

Another devilish trick by Black, but he is facing a very strong opponent.

31.♔h2!

Hou Yifan is very patient, prevents the checks on the backrank... 31.♘xd6? ♕d1+ 32.♔h2 ♖c1–+;

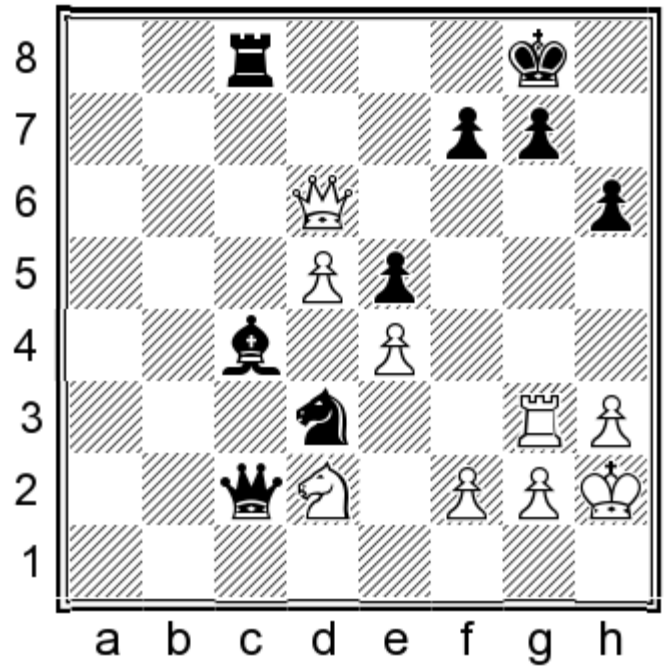
31.♕xd6? loses in a nice way 31...♖xc4! 32.♘xc4 ♕d1+ 33.♔h2 ♕f1! 34.♖g3 ♘e2! and ♕g1 mate.

31...♘d3?

In mutual time-trouble Caruana blunders. He should have continued the plan he started with 31...♕d1! when White has nothing better than 32.♕b3 (*32.♕xd6? ♖xc4! 33.♘xc4 ♕f1! 34.♖g3 ♘e2!*) 32...♕a1! 33.♕a3 (*33.♘b6 ♖c1 34.♘xd7 ♖h1+ 35.♔g3 ♕g1 36.♕b8+ ♔h7 37.♘f8*) 33...♕d1! 34.♕b3!= to make a draw by repetition!

32.♕b7

This is the easiest win, but 32.♕xd6 is also very spectacular 32...♗b5 33.♖g3! ♗xc4



34.♕f6! g6 35.♖xg6+! fxg6 36.♕e6+ ♔g7 37.♕d7+! ♔f6 38.♕xc8± ♕xd2?! 39.♕f8+! White delivers a beautiful mate with a lone queen! 39...♔g5 40.♕e7+ ♔f4 (*40...♔h5 41.g4#*) 41.♕h4#

32...♘c5 33.♕b6 ♘d3

Now Hou Yifan misses some easy wins, but we should not blame the players for the mistakes since we know how hard is to play under the time pressure... especially when at stake is victory in such a huge tournament as Reykjavik!

34.♘xd6

Black could resign after 34.♖g3! ♖xc4 35.♕d8+ ♔h7 36.♕f8+–

34...♖f8 35.♘6c4

35.♘2c4 ♘xf2 36.♘xe5+– was also winning.

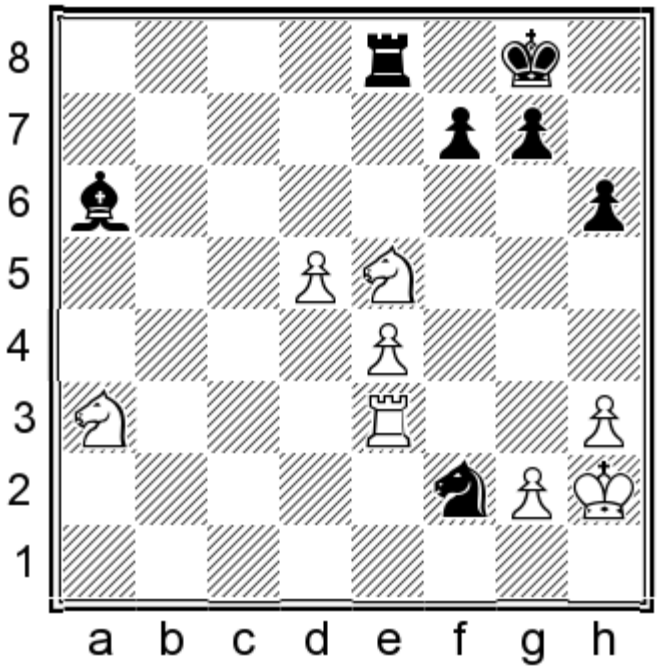
35...♘xf2 36.♕b1!?

She simplifies the position into a clearly better endgame. Black has problems with the e5 pawn and also the rescue of the f2 knight from its cage.

36...♕xb1 37.♘xb1 ♗b5 38.♘ba3 ♗a6

on 38...♗xc4 39.♘xc4 f6 40.d6 ♔f7 41.♔g3 ♘d1 42.♖d3+– the knight would be trapped.

39.♘xe5 ♖e8



40.d6!

A great last move of the time-control, indirectly protecting the e5 knight.

40...♗b7

Finally time-trouble is over! The players get an extra 30 minutes, so it is time to calm down, relax a bit, and then find the way to win.

41.♘xf7??

It's hard to explain this move: White decides to force the draw, when she had a simple win after the most logical continuation. 41.♘ac4! and White is a piece up in all lines: 41...f6 (*41...♘xe4 42.d7 ♖d8 43.♘a5!* This is always the key move. *43...♗a8 44.♘ac6 ♗xc6 45.♘xc6 ♖xd7 46.♖xe4+–*) 42.♘a5 the human win (engines suggest 42.♘d7 which might be even stronger) 42...♗xe4 (*42...♗a8 43.♘ec6+–* and the d-pawn promotes) 43.♘g4! ♘xg4+ 44.hxg4 and Black cannot get rid of the d6 pawn without losing the bishop... 44...♔f7 (*44...♗c6 45.♘xc6! ♖xe3 46.d7 ♖d3 47.d8=♕+ ♖xd8 48.♘xd8+–*) 45.d7 ♖d8 46.♖xe4 ♖xd7 47.♘c6+–

41...♔xf7 42.♖f3+ ♔e6 43.♘b5 ♖b8!

Probably White missed this move, but it seems to me that 43...♔e5 also held the draw.

44.♖xf2 ♗xe4 45.♖e2 ♖xb5 46.♖xe4+ ♔xd6 47.♔g3

Draw agreed! As first seed, Caruana won the event and gained a further 5.5 points on his rating, with which he is already Nr. 6 in the World according to the live rating list!

1/2

GAME 4
V. Anand (2817)
P. Eljanov (2683)
Schachbundesliga 2011/2012 (12.1)
17.03.2012
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We are in the 12th round of Bundesliga, in the decisive match between the teams of Baden-Baden and Werder Bremen. Both teams arrived with an almost full line-up and Anand-Eljanov was the most interesting and spectacular game of the round. The World Champion held a clear advantage after the opening, but slowly Eljanov managed to come back into the game and even had a chance to score the full point after the first time-control.

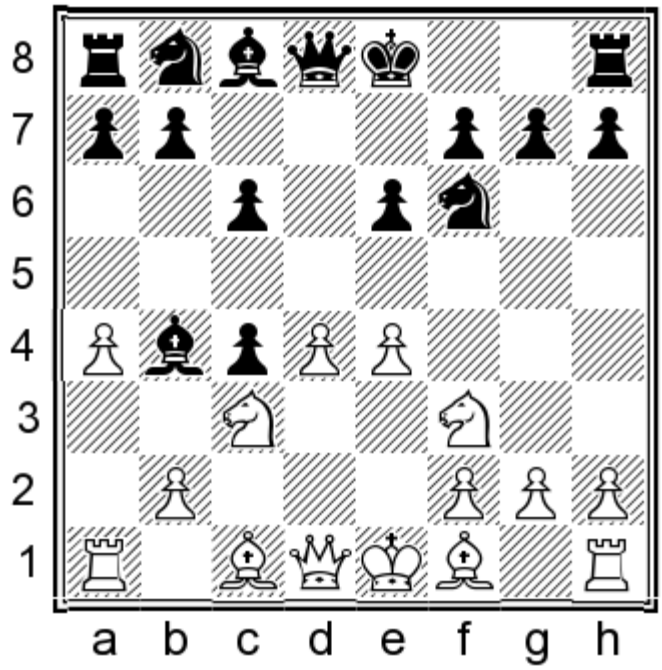
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6

Another game in the Slav Defence, which recently enjoys high popularity.

3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 e6

currently a very fashionable line

6.e4 ♗b4



7.e5!?

Not the main move here. We see 7.♗xc4 or 7.♗g5 much more often.

7...♘d5 8.♗d2 b5!

Black needs to hold the c4 pawn!

9.axb5 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 cxb5 11.♘g5 h6

this move is almost a novelty. 11...♘c6 12.♕h5 ♕e7 13.h4!? is the usual continuation here with very sharp and unclear play.

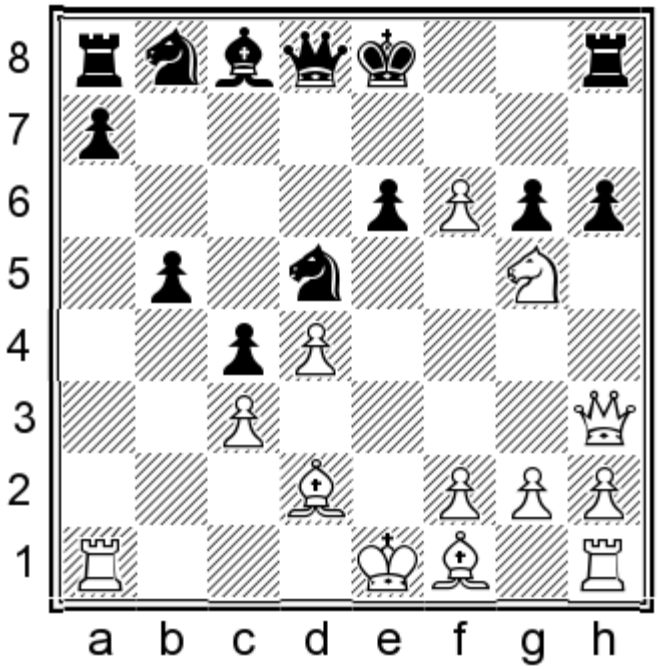
12.♕h5 g6?!N

this is already a novelty, but it's hard to say if Eljanov really prepared it. In a game of the freshly-crowned European Champion Valemtina Gunina there occurred: 12...0-0 13.♘e4 ♘c6 14.♗xh6 (*14.h4!?* with the idea ♖h3-g3 could bring Black in quite some danger) 14...gxh6 15.♕xh6 f5 16.♕g6+ with a draw.

13.♕h3 f5

Black needs to act quickly and cannot let White play ♘e4.

14.exf6



14...e5?!

Black is trying to continue active play, but blunders, and allows an opportunity for White. More solid was 14...♘c6 15.g4 ♕xf6 16.♘e4 ♕e7 17.♗g2 with a strong initiative for the pawn.

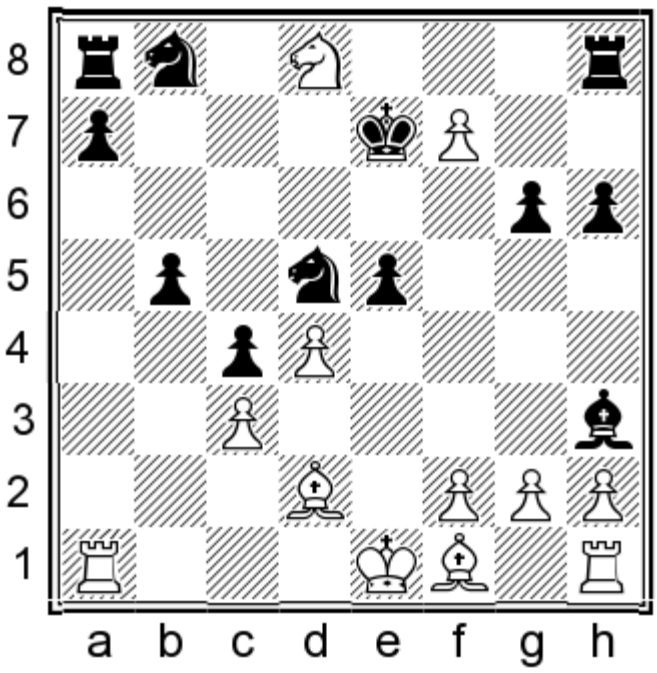
15.f7+?

White misses his chance! Even the World Champions sometimes make a mistake :) The correct choice would be 15.g4! after which Black can do nothing against the deadly threat of ♗g2, e.g. 15...exd4 16.♗g2 ♘c6 17.0-0 ♔f8 18.♖fe1 with a deadly attack.

15...♔f8 16.♘e6+ ♔e7!

probably this move was what White underestimated. 16...♗xe6 17.♕xe6 exd4 18.♕xg6 would lead of course to a winning position for White.

17.♘xd8 ♗xh3

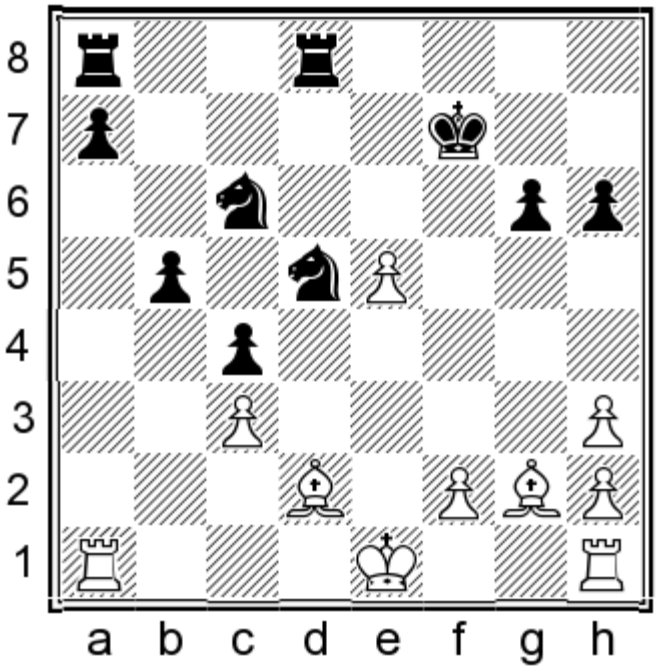


We are now staring at a “crazy” position. Everything is completely unbalanced and the position is very hard to play. On every move both White and Black have several choices of how to continue, and “the choice” is one of the hardest things in a chess game. Objectively speaking, White should still do betterhere

18.gxh3

18.f8=♕+!? pretty move, even if it is very unclear if it is the strongest one 18...♖xf8 19.♗xh6 ♖f5 20.gxh3 ♔xd8 (*20...exd4 21.♘b7 ♖e5+ 22.♔d2 ♘c6 23.♗g2 dxc3+ 24.♔c1* in this very complex position probably White still has better chances) 21.dxe5 ♖xe5+ 22.♔d2 Black has a better pawn structure, but White’s bishop pair plus better development should bring him some edge.

18...♖xd8 19.dxe5 ♔xf7 20.♗g2 ♘c6



21.0-0!

strong chess from White. In case Black manages to play: a5, ♔e6, ♘ce7, ♘f5 he will be doing well. White needs to try to open the position as fast as possible to give the bishops space to act. Also Black's king position will be very vulnerable.

21...♘xe5

Black accepts the challenge! More careful would have been 21...a5!? 22.f4 ♔e6 23.h4! White needs to destroy the blockade pawn on g6 at any cost 23...b4 24.h5 bxc3 25.♗xc3 ♘xc3 26.♗xc6 ♖a6 and it is hard to even say who is doing better here.

22.f4

a very human move. 22.♖fb1! would be the choice of the computer. Black cannot hold the b5 pawn, e.g. 22...a6 23.♖xb5 axb5 24.♖xa8 ♖d6 25.♔f1 and finally we have a "human" position. White has a slightly more pleasant endgame.

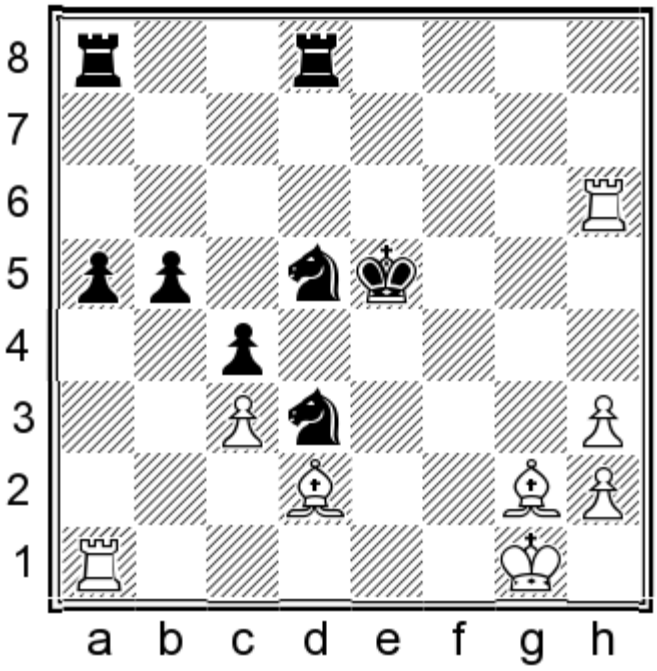
22...♘d3 23.f5 gxf5?

this is a serious mistake by Black. Now White gets exactly what he was hoping for; very open play where the bishop pair turns into a deadly weapon. 23...g5! was better since Black needed to keep the position closed 24.♖a6 ♘3f4 25.♗xf4 gxf4 26.♖fa1 and again we continue with a highly unbalanced game. One thing is certain, it is very hard for Black to play such a position.

24.♖xf5+

24.♖a6 f4!

24...♔e6 25.♖h5 a5 26.♖xh6+ ♔e5



27.♗e1!

another great move by the World Champion. White is bringing the bishop to g3. Black's king is standing "naked" in the middle of the board and this cannot end well for him...

27...♘5f4 28.♗g3 ♔f5 29.♖f1!

there is no reason for White to win the exchange by playing 29.♗xa8 ♖xa8 30.♖f1 ♔e4 and Black has some drawing chances because of the b4 push that will leave Black with very dangerous pawns.

29...♔g5 30.♖b6 ♖ab8 31.♖a6

it is hard to give Black advice here, and to play this position without "computer" help is almost impossible. From the human point of view, White position looks close to winning.

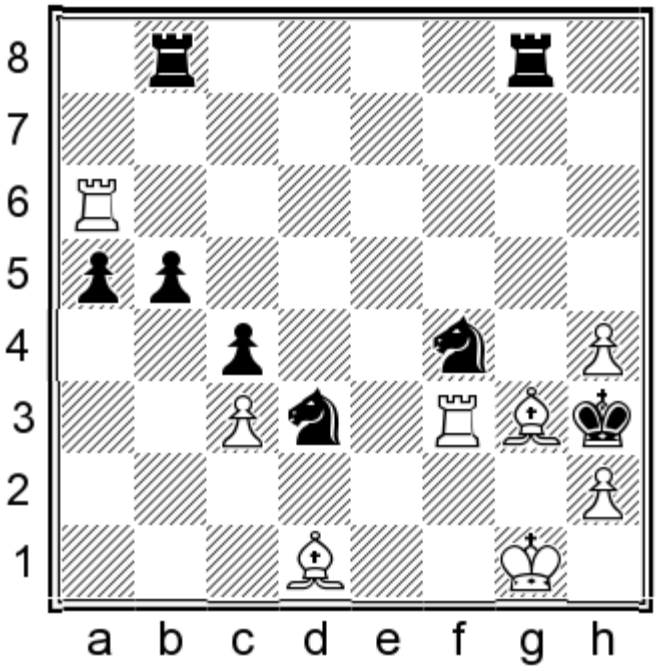
31...♖f8 32.h4+! ♔g4 33.♗f3+ ♔h3

Black king is trapped, pieces are hanging and it seems that nothing can Black anymore...but the game of chess is unpredictable even at the highest level!

34.♗d1?

a big mistake, probably based on a miscalculation. The simple 34.♖xa5 is strong, e.g. 34...♖b6 (*34...b4 35.♖g5*) 35.♔h1 ♖g8 36.h5 and it is clear this game will not last much longer. White is simply winning.

34...♖g8 35.♖f3



35...♖bd8!

short on time, Black finds great defensive moves.

36.♔f1?

another big mistake from White. 36.♔h1 ♘e5 37.♖f1 ♖xg3 38.hxg3 ♘d5 with a very unclear position.

36...♘e5!

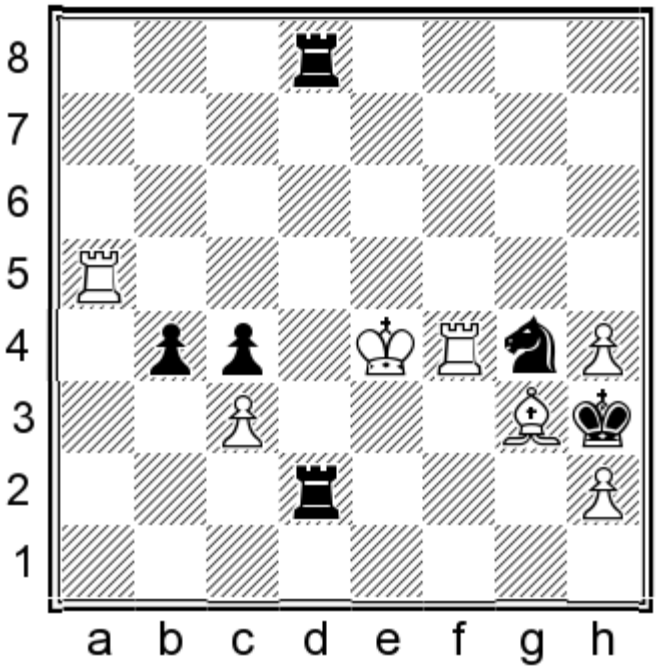
suddenly Black is the one who is better!

37.♖xf4 ♖xd1+ 38.♔e2 ♖gd8 39.♖xa5 ♖1d2+ 40.♔e3 ♘g4+ 41.♔e4

The time-trouble period is over. It is easy to see that Black is doing better, but it is far from easy to convert this advantage.

41...♖e8+

41...b4!



42.cxb4 c3 43.♖c5 c2–+ and probably Black would have won the game. The bad position of the White king, plus the c2 pawn, gives Black a decisive advantage. It’s funny to see that for the last 20 moves the Black king was on the run and all White pieces were circling around him, and now the situation has changed, with the White king being the one under attack in the centre of the board.

42.♔f5 ♘e3+?

even here it was not too late for the b4 push 42...b4 43.cxb4 c3 44.♖c5 ♘e3+ 45.♔g6 c2 and Black keeps some winning chances.

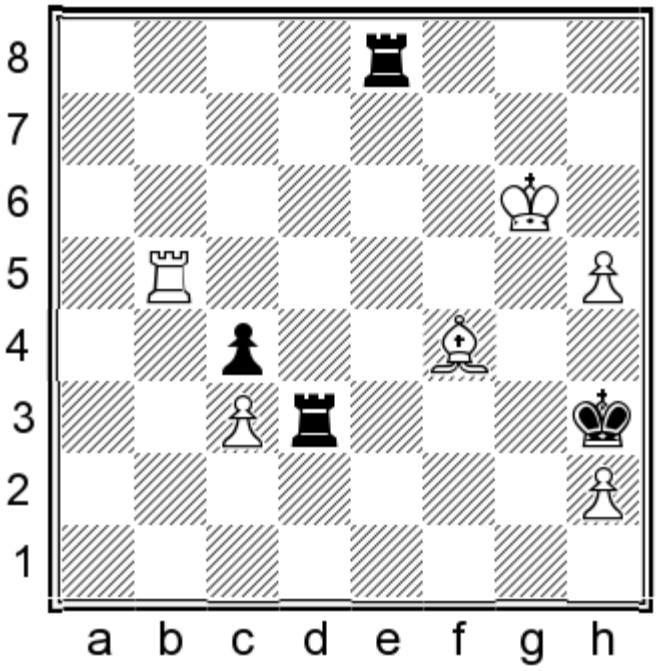
43.♔g6 ♘d5 44.♖xb5!

a nice idea to escape. White is giving up the exchange, but getting rid of the dangerous b-pawn. The position of the King on g6, plus the bishop which will protect White’s king from checks and also hold Black’s c pawn, gives White an almost certain draw.

44...♘xf4+ 45.♗xf4 ♖d3

the last try to play for a win would have been 45...♖f2!? 46.♗g5 ♖e6+ 47.♔g7 ♖a2 where probably the position is close to a draw, but Black could still keep on trying...

46.h5!



The final technical move. The white pawn is as dangerous as the Black c pawn and, as we know, a bishop on a long diagonal is as good as a rook in such endgames.

46...♖xc3 47.h6 ♖b3

a very exciting and interesting game!

1/2

GAME 5
P. Svidler (2744)
A. Morozevich (2765)
Russian league (5)
13.04.2012, [D37]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Two days after his defeat against Jakovenko, Svidler had to face the same opening — this time against Alexander Morozevich. A fantastic battle ensued which ended in draw after excellent play from both sides.

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.d4 ♗e7 5.♗f4

Enough of 5.♕c2!

5...0-0 6.a3

A very small side-line, which was tried by Carlsen and Topalov as well. 6.e3 is the mainline, with thousands of games in the database.

6...b6

The most common move, however Anand and Kramnik played 6...dxc4 in 2011. Now, Black wants to occupy the

center with pawns and prepares for c5.

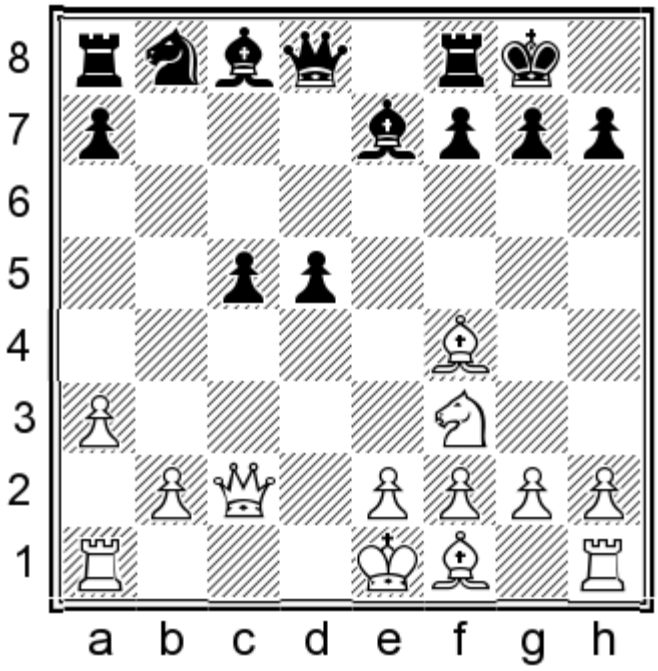
7.cxd5

7.♕c2 occurred at the highest level in a quite recent game 7...c5 8.♖d1 ♘c6 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 10.dxc5 bxc5 11.e3 (it would be interesting to know Aronian's idea after 11.e4 Black gets compensation in both lines, but not obvious if it is enough or not. 11...♘xf4 (*11...♘d4!? 12.♘xd4 cxd4*) 12.♖xd8 ♖xd8) 11...♕a5 12.♘e5 ♘xe5 13.♗xe5 ♖d8 14.♗d3 ♗a6! 15.0-0 (*15.♗xh7+ ♔h8* White loses too much time in development.) 15...♗xd3 16.♕xd3 ♘xc3 17.♕xc3 ♕xc3 18.♗xc3 ♔f8 Black equalized and the players soon agreed to a draw in Topalov-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2012.

7...♘xd5 8.♘xd5 exd5 9.♕c2

Svidler prepares to undermine Black's strong central pawns. Carlsen beat Anand in a blitz game back in 2009, but it was definitely not because of the opening 9.e3 c5 10.♗d3 ♘c6 11.♕c2 h6 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.0-0 c4 14.♗e2 ♗e6 15.♖fd1 ♕b6 16.♖ab1 ♖ac8 17.h3 ♗f6 and Black was completely fine.

9...c5 10.dxc5 bxc5



11.e4

The point behind the 9.♕c2 move. If Black could consolidate his center, he could quickly take over the initiative. There were two games in the database for this position, in both of which Black equalized quite easily... however Morozevich came up with a very interesting novelty.

11...dxe4!

Of course, it is very logical to open the center against the e1 king, but what happens with the a8 rook? 11...♗b7 12.exd5 ♕xd5 13.♗c4 ♕h5 14.♕b3 ♗xf3 15.♕xf3 ♕xf3 16.gxf3 ♘c6 with more or less balanced endgame in Gyimesi-Naiditsch, German League 2010.;

11...d4 12.♗d3 ♗a6 13.♗xa6 (*13.0-0* could be an improvement on White's play.) 13...♕a5+ 14.♘d2 ♕xa6 15.♗xb8 ♖axb8 16.♘c4 d3! 17.♕xd3 ♖fd8 18.♕e2 ♗g5 Black gained a very strong initiative for the sacrificed pawn in

Wojtaszek-Roiz, Lublin 2011.

12.♕xe4

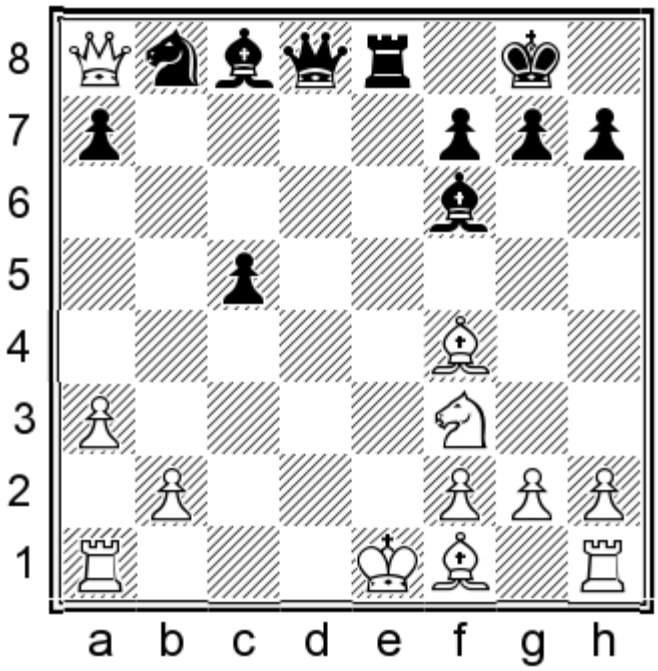
Just as in the game against Jakovenko, Svidler tries to trap the a8 rook. Such coincidence happens sometimes in chess.

12...♖e8!

Well played by Morozevich. It would be interesting to know until which move this was the preparation of the players...

13.♗d3

Preparing for O-O-O and ♕xh7. It seems like White is crushing, but...let's see what happens if he accepts the sacrifice: 13.♕xa8 ♗f6+



14.♗e3 is the only move

a) Really nice lines arise after 14.♗e2 ♖xe2+!! Black must keep the king in the center, but it costs him the other rook! 15.♔xe2 ♗a6+ 16.♔e1 ♕e8+! (It's very important to have the ..♕b5 option on ♗e3!) 17.♗e3

(*17.♗e5 ♗xe5 18.♘xe5 ♕xe5+ 19.♔d1 ♕xb2∓; 17.♘e5 ♗xe5*)

17...♕b5! Three pieces are attacking the king and White has no defense. 18.♘g1 ♗xb2 19.♖d1 ♗c3+ and ♕f1 mate.;

b) 14.♘e5 ♗xe5 15.♗xe5 ♕a5+! Black is winning in both lines, despite currently being a rook down. 16.b4

(*16.♔d1 ♖d8+ 17.♗d3 ♖xd3+ 18.♔e2 ♕d2+ 19.♔f1 ♗a6!–+* this is the point! Black has too many threats and on *20.♕xb8 ♖d8* is check.)

16...cxb4 17.♕xb8 b3+ 18.♔d1 ♗g4+–+;

14...♕b6! with the idea of ♗b7, trapping the queen.

(*14...♗xb2?* would give enough time for White to solve the problems around his king *15.♗c4! ♗xa1 16.0-0+–*)

15.♕d5

(*15.♗c4 ♗b7*)

15...♕xb2 16.♖d1 ♗b7! All the pieces are joining in the attack, but strangely Black has only a draw after White's best moves. 17.♕xc5 ♗xf3 18.♖c1! the only way to avoid ♗c3!

(*18.gxf3? ♗c3+–+*)

18...♗h4!? 19.♖c2 ♕b1+ 20.♖c1 ♕b2= with repetition.;

13.♘e5 ♗f6 14.♗d3 would be a transposition to the game.

13...♗f6

Now it is all about calculation: chess principles don't help here. Both players find the best moves until the end.

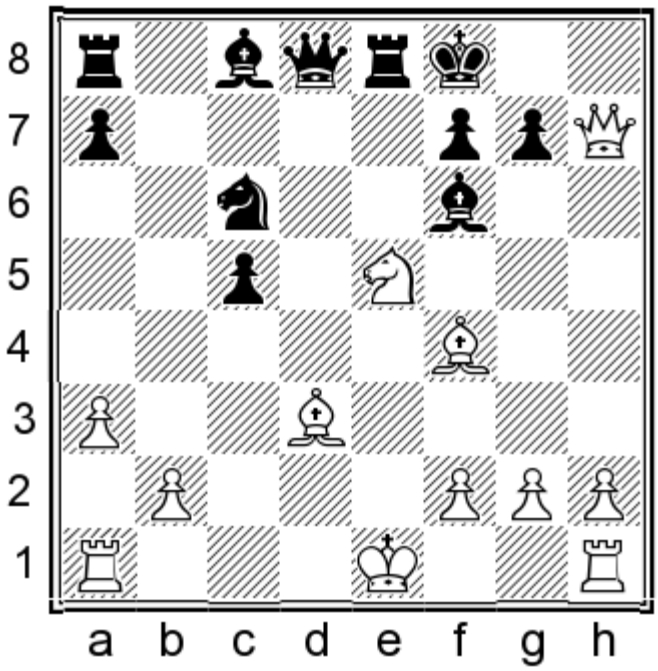
14.♘e5!

14.♗e5 would be a mistake because of 14...♘d7! 15.♕xh7+ (*15.♕xa8 ♘xe5 16.♘xe5 ♕xd3!–+*) 15...♔f8 16.0-0-0 ♘xe5 17.♗b5 ♗f5! The only move, but good! White is in trouble. 18.♕h8+ (*18.♕xf5 ♕b6*) 18...♔e7∓

14...♘c6

This is an interesting moment in the game. Black has two choices, both of which lead to a draw. One is a very simple and short line, while the other is amazingly sharp, and one mistake could be fatal for both sides. Most people would prefer the first one, but Morozevich — faithful to his style — goes for the complications. 14...♗f5 was the calm reaction 15.♕xf5 g6 16.♕e4 ♘d7! 17.0-0 ♗xe5= with an equal position.

15.♕xh7+ ♔f8



16.♕h8+!

Svidler also calculates very precisely! The tempting 16.0-0-0 would be bad in view of 16...♗xe5 17.♕h8+ (*17.♗xe5 ♖xe5*) 17...♔e7 18.♗g5+ ♔d6!! and Black is about to win. Any move of the d3 bishop would be met by ♘d4! 19.♗e4+ ♘d4.

16...♔e7 17.♘xc6+

Check-Queen!

17...♔d7+

Countercheck-Queen! An incredible position!

18.♗e5!

18.♔f1 ♔xc6 19.♕h7 g6! 20.♖d1 Black wins with a nice queen sacrifice 20...♗f5! 21.♗b5+ ♔xb5 22.♖xd8 ♖axd8–+ because White's pieces are not co-ordinated.

18...♔xc6!

Other moves were bad. 18...♖xe5+? 19.♘xe5+ where White takes back with check, and 18...♖xh8 19.♘xd8 ♗xe5 20.♘xf7±.

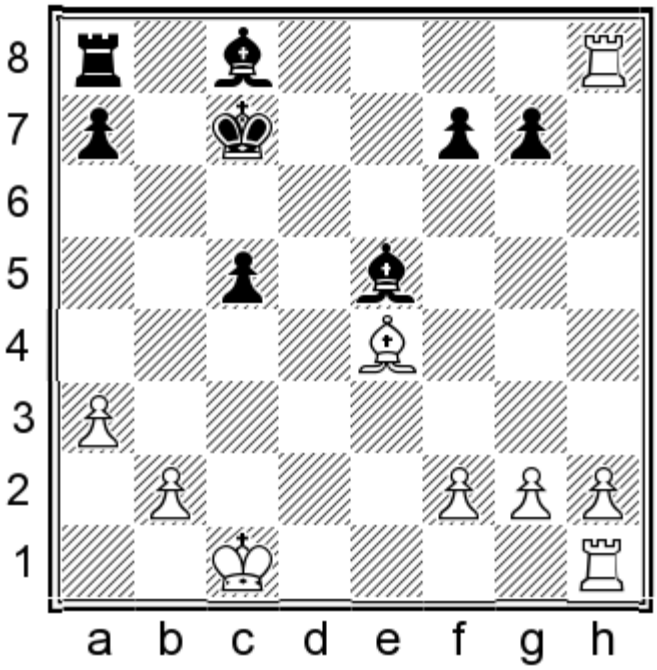
19.0-0-0!

There is no time to take care of such small matters as the h8 queen. :) White had prepared for ♗e4! e.g. 19.♗e4+? ♔b6–+

19...♗xe5

19...♖xh8 would be similar to the game 20.♗e4+ ♔b6 21.♖xd8 ♗xe5! (*21...♖xd8? 22.♗xf6 gxf6 23.♗xa8*±) 22.♖xh8 ♗f4+! and we have the same position as in the game, except that the king is on b6 and not on c7, but it doesn't make any difference.

20.♗e4+ ♔c7 21.♖xd8 ♖xh8 22.♖xh8



Maybe at this moment some of the "Moro" fans gave up their hopes today; he is an exchange and a pawn down after all. But here comes the cold shower, which had to be foreseen after the 18th move!

22...♗f4+!

and the king has no good square, it has to walk into a nice motif.

23.♔c2

23.♔b1 was the same. 23.♔d1 ♗g4

23...♗b7!!

This was the whole point! White has nothing better than to go for a drawn endgame.

24.♗xb7

24.♖xa8? ♗xe4+

24...♖xh8 25.♗d5 ♖d8

The most accurate drawing line, where Black holds the material equality. 25...♖xh2 26.♖xh2 ♗xh2 27.♗xf7 ♗g1 was also an easy draw, of course, but at least White could have claimed that he was a pawn up.

26.♖d1

26.♗xf7 ♖d2+ 27.♔b3 ♖xf2=

26...♗xh2 27.♗xf7

27.g3 ♗g1=

27...♖f8!

Black resets the balance.

28.♗d5 ♖xf2+ 29.♖d2 ♖xd2+ 30.♔xd2 ♗e5 31.b3 ♗f6

What a game! Both players deserve congratulations!

1/2

GAME 6
L. Aronian
V. Kramnik
Zuerich (6)
27.04.2012
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

We are in the final game of the historic match between two 2800+ players. The score is 2.5–2.5 and Aronian has the White pieces. It was obvious that he would press hard to win the match, but on the other hand he had to be careful not to push too hard.

1.e4

This is the 3rd time that Aronian played 1.e4 in the match which I guess was quite a big surprise for everybody.

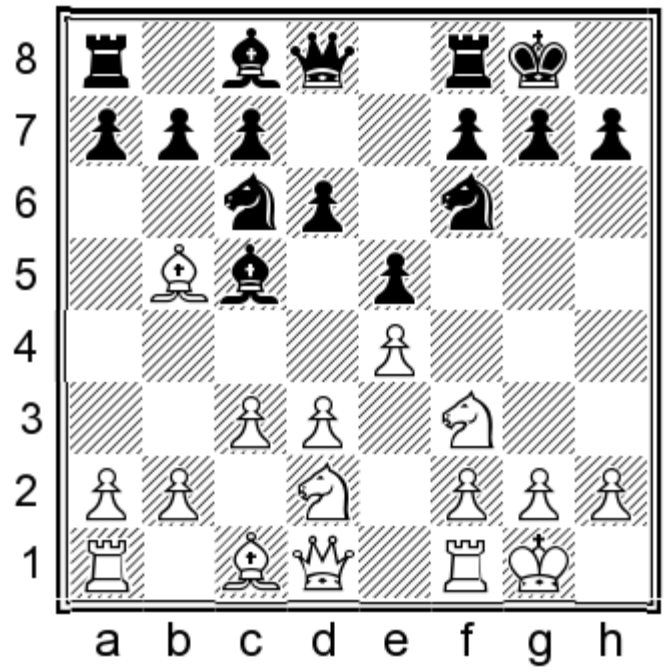
1...e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6

Kramnik had no reason to deviate from his pet Berlin line; it was up to Aronian to show something new.

4.d3

Here we are! In their previous games, Aronian went for the mainline with 4.0-0. Now, he is aiming for a more complex middle-game with more pieces on the board.

4...♗c5 5.♘bd2 d6 6.c3 0-0 7.0-0



The first critical moment of the game. In a well-known theoretical position, Kramnik practically comes up with a novelty.

7...♘e7!?

A typical idea in the Ruy Lopez, aiming to transfer the knight to g6. It was previously considered as premature, since

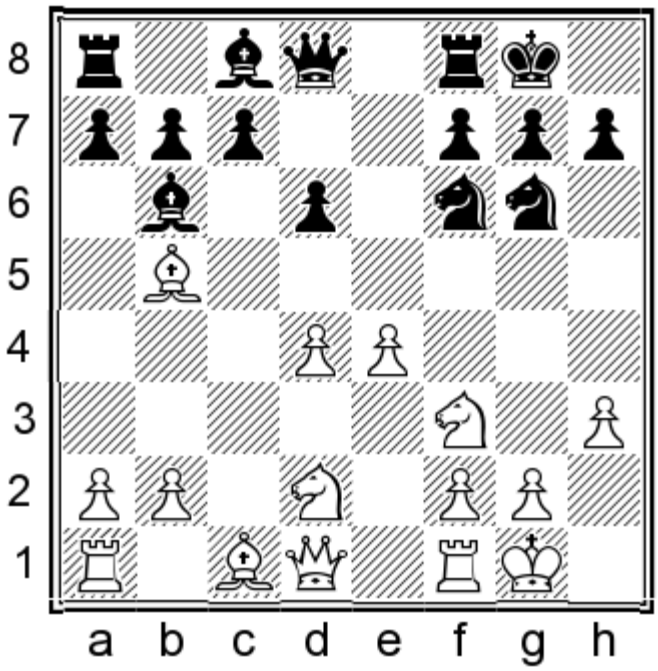
after 8.d4 Black has to give up his center.

8.h3

Aronian does not try to refute Kramnik's idea. 8.d4 was the critical test of 7...♘e7. Let's check what Black's preparation might have involved. 8...exd4 9.cxd4 ♗b6 10.h3 White has to prevent ♗g4, which would have put great pressure on the central pawns.

(*10.*♖*e1* ♗*g4 11.h3* ♗*h5* Black is fine.)

10...♘g6



11.♖e1 The critical position. The computer suggests slow plans, but I don't like them at all. However, a quick break in the center might solve Black's opening problems. 11...d5!? 12.e5 ♘h5! I like this move a lot, with the idea of quickly undermining the e5 pawn with f6! 13.♘b3!

(The logical 13.♘f1 is probably a mistake. 13...c6 14.♗d3

(*14.*♗*a4 f6*∓ *15.e6* ♖*e8*)

14...♘hf4 15.♗c2 f6∓ Everything works as expected for Black.)

13...c6 14.♗d3 ♘hf4

(*14...f6?* is too rushed. *15.*♗*xg6 hxg6 16.*♘*h4*±)

15.♗xg6

(White can't keep his important bishop with *15.*♗*c2* because *15...f6!* arrives in time.)

15...fxg6!? 16.♗xf4 ♖xf4 and I like Black's position. He has two bishops, the e5-passer will be blockaded with ♗e6, and the heavy pieces might cause problems on the f-file. A potential idea for the future could be g5-g4, with an attack.

8...♘g6 9.♖e1

White also prepares the standard plan of driving his knight to g3.

9...c6

Kramnik decides to head back to one of the main lines by transposition. In my opinion 9...a6 is worth a try in the future. 10.♗a4 b5 11.♗c2 ♗b7 12.♘f1 (*12.d4 ♗b6 13.♘f1 c5*) 12...♗b6 13.♘g3 d5 and Black is fine in both lines.

10.♗a4 ♖e8 11.d4 ♗b6

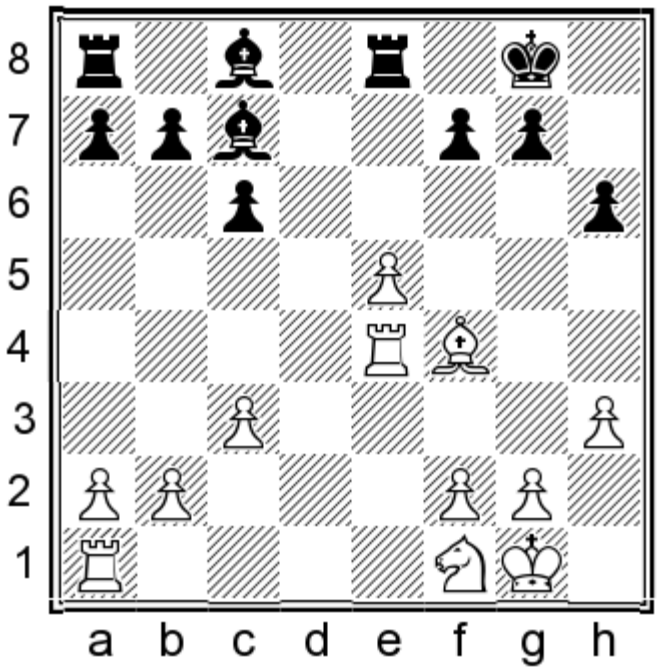
We usually reach this position via the 7...♗b6 move order.

12.♗c2

White must over-protect the e4 pawn in order to transfer the knight to g3.

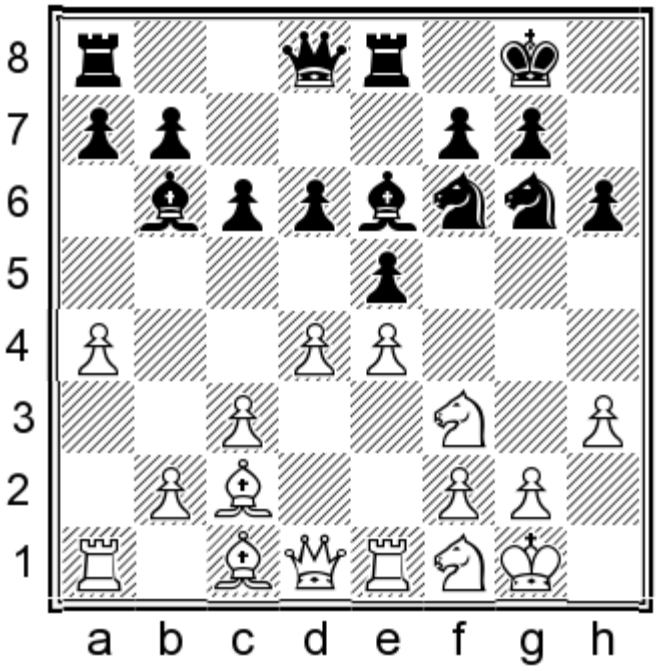
12...h6 13.a4!?

This is considered to be the critical move. White keeps his knight on d2 in order to prevent the 13.♘f1 d5 possibility. 13.♘f1 there had already been a blitz game featuring Kramnik in this position. 13...d5 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.dxe5 ♖xe5?! was a mistake. (15...♘xe4 would have equalized comfortably. 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.♕xd8 ♗xd8 18.♖xe4 ♗c7 19.♗f4



White can keep his extra pawn, but the activity of Black's pieces will give more than enough compensation. (*19.f4 f6*) 19...f5! 20.♖e2 g5! 21.♗h2 f4! Closing the bishop out of the game. 22.♖ae1 ♗f5 with initiative.) 16.♗f4 ♖e8 17.e5 ♘h7 18.♕d3 ♘f8 Radjabov-Kramnik, Kazan 2011 (blitz). White could have gained an advantage after 19.♕g3.

13...♗e6 14.♘f1



14...exd4!

A very strong novelty! Black begins concrete actions in the center. In the previous game Black quickly found himself in trouble. 14...♕c7 15.♘g3 ♖ad8 16.♗e3 d5 and the central break ran into a strong refutation: 17.♘xe5! ♘xe5 18.♗f4! ♘fd7 19.a5! ♗xa5 20.exd5 ♗xd5 21.dxe5± and White soon won in Alekseev-Jumabayev, Moscow 2012;

14...d5? 15.exd5

15.♘xd4

It was a difficult decision whether to obtain a strong center with 15.cxd4 or to play the f4 plan after 15.♘xd4. Black has his ideas after both captures, e.g. 15.cxd4 d5! 16.e5 ♘e4 17.♘1d2 (White wins a pawn, but only temporarily. *17.♗xe4? dxe4 18.♖xe4 ♗d5*) 17...f5! a very important move, either to keep the powerful e4 knight or to break White's center. 18.exf6 ♘xd2! 19.♗xd2 (*19.♗xg6 ♕xf6! 20.♗xe8 ♘xf3+ 21.♕xf3 ♕xf3 22.gxf3 ♖xe8*∓ This exchange sacrifice was the entire point of 14...exd4!) 19...♕xf6 and Black is fine.

15...♗d7

Again Black is ready for the d5 break.

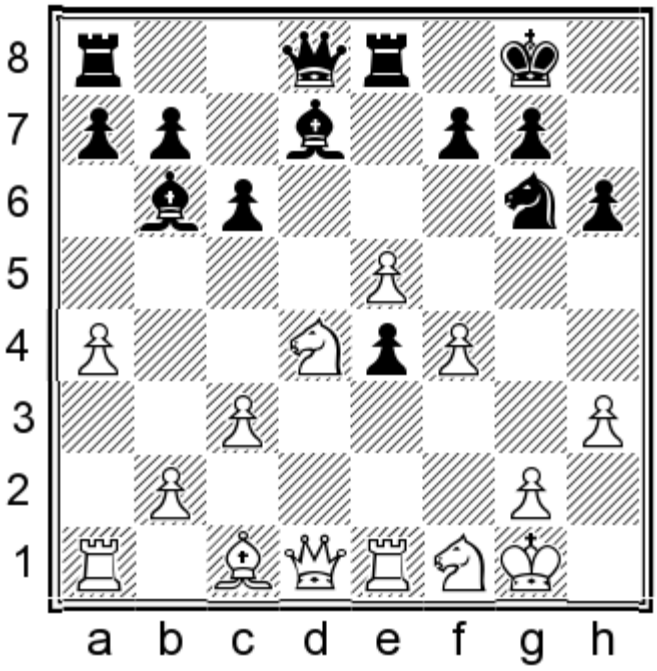
16.f4!

In order to have 17.e5 available on 16...d5.

16...d5!

If White had enough time to play ♘g3, he could have prevented the d5 break forever.

17.e5 ♘e4 18.♗xe4 dxe4



Another critical position. White has to choose between three options. Black's main idea is f6 or f5.

19.a5!?

A really creative pawn sacrifice. We will see the point a few moves later. 19.♘g3 was the most logical move, to take the e4 pawn with the knight. 19...f5! 20.exf6 ♕xf6 Here we get the point of Aronian's 19.a5 move. He wanted to avoid this recapture, because the bishop would hang on a5. 21.a5! (*21.♘xe4?! ♕h4* again with very strong compensation) 21...♗xd4+ 22.♕xd4 ♕xd4+ 23.cxd4 ♘h4! 24.♖xe4 ♘f5 25.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 26.♘xf5 ♗xf5 White is a pawn up, but due to the appearance of opposite-colored bishops and the activity of Black's pieces, a draw would be the logical outcome of the game. 19.♖xe4 was the least promising alternative, when Black gets a very strong initiative after 19...c5 20.♘f3 ♗c6 21.♖e1 c4+ 22.♔h2 (*22.♘d4? ♕h4* causes huge problems around the f4 pawn.) 22...f6 and Black is fine.

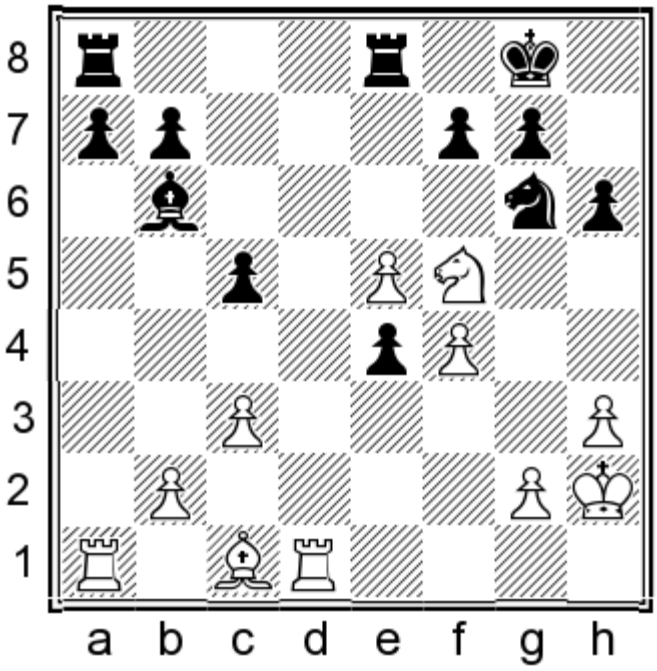
19...♗xa5 20.♘g3 ♗b6 21.♔h2!

Prophylaxis against the ♕h4 ideas. 21.♘xe4?! would be a mistake. 21...♕h4! 22.♘d6 ♘xf4! 23.♗xf4 ♕xf4 24.♘xe8 ♖xe8 and despite only having one pawn for the exchange, Black is clearly better due to his bishop pair and the weak e5 pawn.

21...c5!?

In my opinion 21...♘h4 was a safer way to equality. 22.♘xe4 c5 23.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 24.♕xf3 ♗c6 with a balanced position.

22.♘df5 ♗xf5 23.♘xf5 ♕xd1 24.♖xd1



24...♖ad8

Black is still a pawn up, but it is he who must be careful not to stand worse, owing to the weaknesses of the e4 and b7 pawns, the bad b6 bishop and the hole on d6. When Aronian played 19.a5, he was hoping to get an advantage thanks to these factors. On the other hand, Kramnik is planning on f6, which could solve his problems.

25.♗e3

On 25.♖e1 ♖d5! 26.♘d6 ♖e7 and f6 is coming next. 25.♘d6 f6! 26.♗e3 ♖f8 and Black seems to equalize.

25...♖d3!

A very strong move, which complicates matters. The principled 25...f6 was premature. 26.♖xd8 ♖xd8 27.exf6 gxf6 28.♖a4! with a clear advantage.

26.♖e1

Aronian refreshes the threat of ♘d6.

26...f6!

Black had to undermine the center, even if it costs him the h6 pawn. With this, he also gets rid of the d6 stronghold.

27.exf6 gxf6 28.♘xh6+ ♔f8?

The first mistake of the game! Black should have sent the knight to f5, and we will soon understand why. 28...♔g7 was the correct move. 29.♘f5+ ♔f7 30.♖a4 ♘e7! The exchange of knights was an important idea, which leads to complete equality!

29.♖a4!

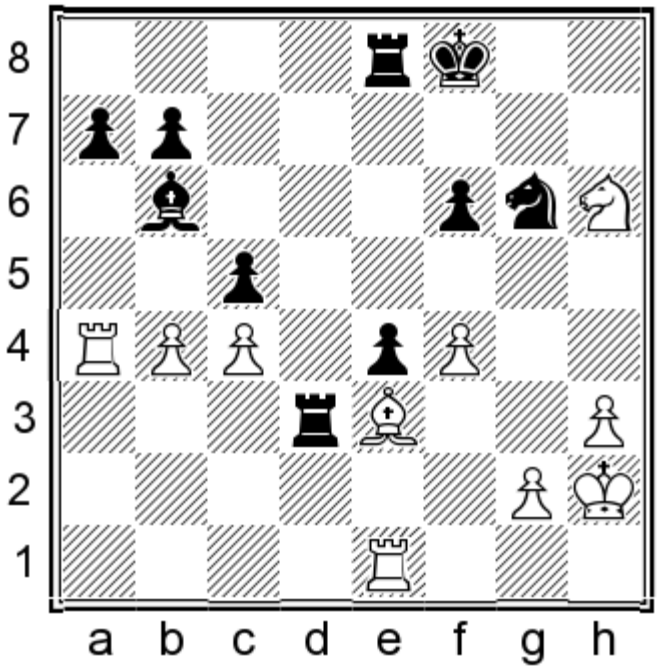
A really strong move, Black has serious problems with his e4 pawn, due to the f5 threat! That’s why he should have

forced the knight to f5 first.

29...♖d5 30.c4?

A miscalculation by Aronian. 30.f5! would have given White a big advantage. 30...♗c7+ (*30...♘h4 31.c4!* and the knight is trapped.) 31.♔g1 ♗g3 32.♖f1 ♘e5 33.♖xe4±

30...♖d3! 31.b4?!



The previous move was based on this idea. Aronian was hoping for 31...cxb4, but Kramnik finds a brilliant idea!

31...♖xe3!!

Black gets two very dangerous passers after this great exchange sacrifice. Suddenly, Black has a winning advantage. What a dramatic twist to the game! 31...cxb4 32.♗xb6 axb6 33.♖xb4 ♘xf4 34.♖xb6 ♔g7 35.♘g4 This unpleasant endgame was Aronian's idea.

32.♖xe3 cxb4 33.♖g3

There was no increment of 30 seconds in the match, and the time pressure made the task of both players even harder. 33.♖e1 ♘xf4

33...e3

A logical move, but White survives. 33...♘e7!! was the winning move. Of course for computers this is an easy one. The next moves of the line are also amazingly hard to find for a human. 34.♘g4 (*34.♖xb4 ♗c7* is the idea. White's pieces are really poorly placed, he cannot avoid losing big material.) 34...♘f5 35.♖b3 (35.♘xf6 ♘xg3 36.♔xg3 (*36.♘xe8 ♘f1+* An important "zwischenzug"!) 36...♖e7 37.♘d5 ♖g7+ 38.♔h2 e3 White can't stop the pawns.) 35...e3 36.♖b1 e2 37.♘xf6 (*37.♖e1 b3 38.♘xf6 ♗f2*) 37...♖e7 38.♘d5 ♘e3! 39.♘xe7 ♘d1! Black promotes to a queen after this nice rank-closing combo!

34.♖xg6 e2 35.♖a1

35.♖g8+ ♔e7 36.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 37.♖a1 ♗f2 of course was not the way to play for White. The queenside passers decide the game.

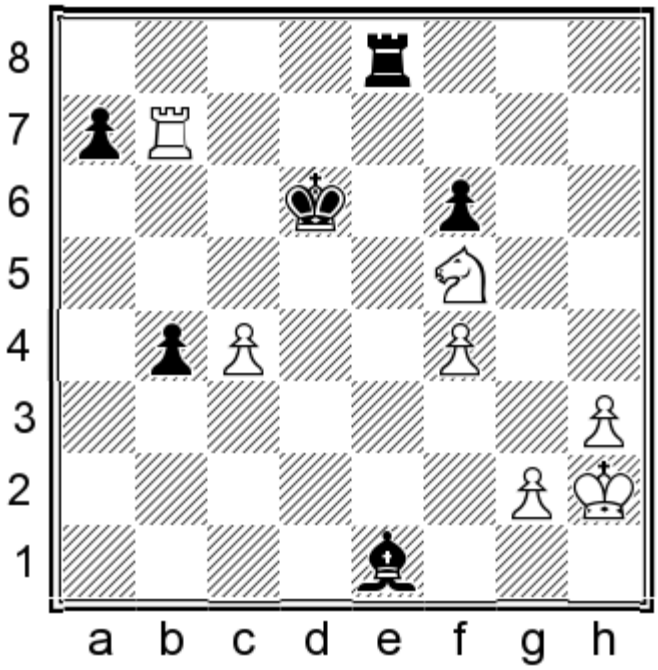
35...♗f2!

But not 35...e1=♕?? 36.♖g8+ ♔e7 37.♖xe1+

36.♖g8+

Aronian logically goes for the b7 pawn, but at the same time he helps the Black king to support his own pawns. 36.♖xf6+ ♔g7 37.♖d6 e1=♕ 38.♖xe1 ♖xe1 and Black's a- and b-pawns seem more dangerous than the f-g-h trio.

36...♔e7 37.♖g7+ ♔d6 38.♖xb7 e1=♕ 39.♖xe1 ♗xe1 40.♘f5+



40.♖xa7 ♔c6 41.♘f5 transposes to the 40.♘f5+ ♔c6 line.

40...♔c5

The final move of time-trouble. — and an inaccuracy! Kramnik could have checked Aronian's defensive abilities a bit more. On 40...♔c6! 41.♖xa7 b3 42.♘d4+ ♔b6 White has to find the only move to hold the draw. 43.♖a1!

(However 43.♖a3 seems to lose after 43...b2 44.♖b3+ ♔c5 45.♘c2

(45.♖xb2 ♔xd4 46.♖b6 ♖e3!! ♗g3 threatens with mate.

(*46...♗h4 47.g3!*)

47.g4 ♗h4 and on g5, Black always has f5.)

45...♗c3! 46.♘a3 ♖a8! 47.♘b1

(*47.♖xc3 ♖xa3!*)

47...♗d4 48.♘d2 ♖a4! and the ♖b4 idea decides the game. Here is one line to demonstrate: 49.h4 ♖b4 50.♖xb4 ♔xb4 51.h5 ♔c3 52.♘b1+ ♔c2 53.♘a3+ ♔b3 54.♘b1 ♔a2 55.c5 ♔xb1 56.c6 ♗b6 57.h6 ♔c2 58.h7 b1=♕ Black should win.)

43...♗c3 44.c5+! ♔b7 45.♖b1 ♗xd4 46.♖xb3+ ♔c6 47.g4 and White will be able to exchange the f6 pawn, and hold the draw.

41.♖b5+!

Thanks to this small tactical trick, White forces a draw.

41...♔c6

41...♔xc4?? 42.♘d6+

42.♘d4+ ♔c7 43.♖c5+

and a draw was agreed after a very interesting battle in view of 43.♖c5+ ♔b7 44.♖b5+ ♔c7

We could see that both players had their chance to win the match, but it finished in a 3–3 tie after all.

1/2

GAME 7
L. Aronian (2825)
A. Grischuk (2761)
Tal memorial
16.06.2012, [E15]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Despite the fact that this game lasted only 28 moves, we will see a very interesting and eventful draw. Actually, it seems like both sides played perfect chess!

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6

Recently Grischuk has played every opening! This time he chose the Queen's Indian Defense.

4.g3

And Aronian headed for his favorite 4.g3 system.

4...♗b4+!?

This was probably the first surprise. The move is a side-line compared to the 4...♗a6 and 4...♗b7 options. However, in my opinion, we will see this idea more often because Aronian played the critical line and Grischuk seems to have refuted it.

5.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 6.♕xd2

This is the right capture. The ideal development of the b1 knight is to c3.

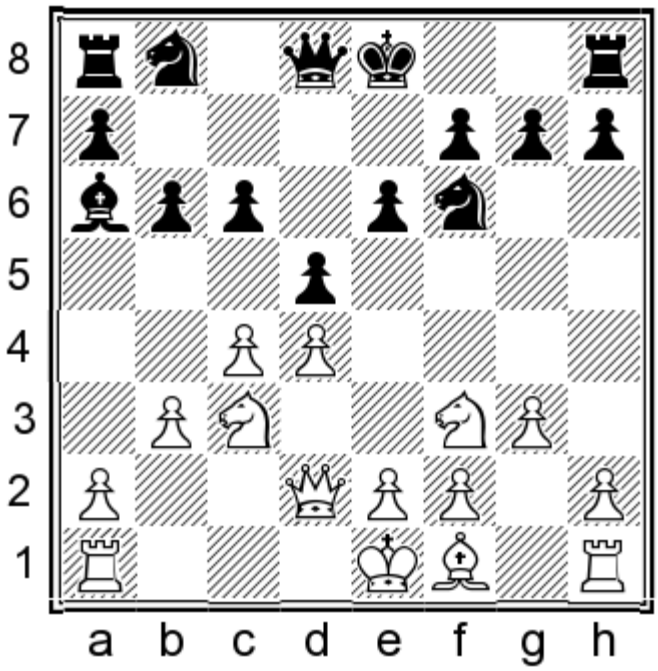
6...♗a6 7.b3 c6

Black would like to build a strong center with d5, but first he prepares for a possible capture with the c-pawn.

8.♘c3

This is considered to be critical. Normal development leads to equality after 8.♗g2 d5 9.0-0 0-0 (*9...dxc4* is bad, because of *10.♘e5*) 10.♘e5 (*10.♖c1 ♘bd7*=) 10...♘fd7 11.♘xd7 ♘xd7 12.cxd5 cxd5= with complete equality and a lot of draws in the database.

8...d5



9.e4!

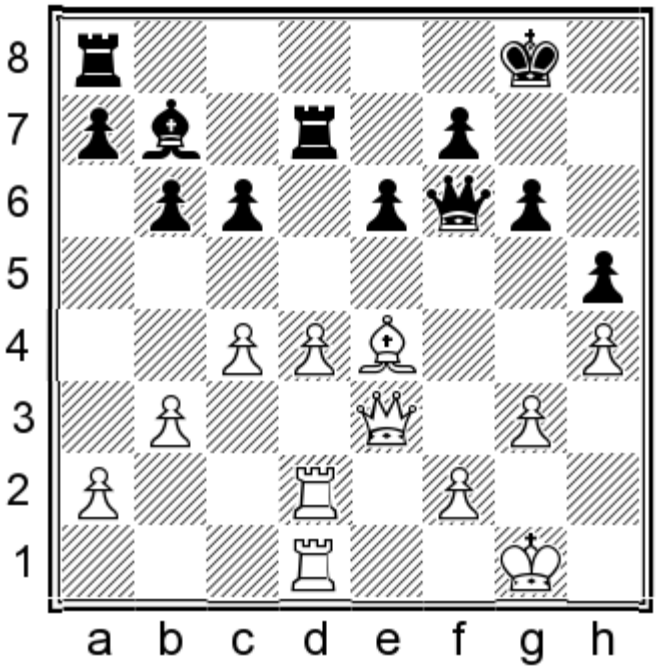
This temporary pawn sacrifice is a typical motif in the Queen's Indian to undermine Black's center.

9...♘xe4 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♘g5

This is the point. Black cannot protect his e4 pawn and, if he doesn't do something concrete, he'll end up in a bad position...

11...c5!

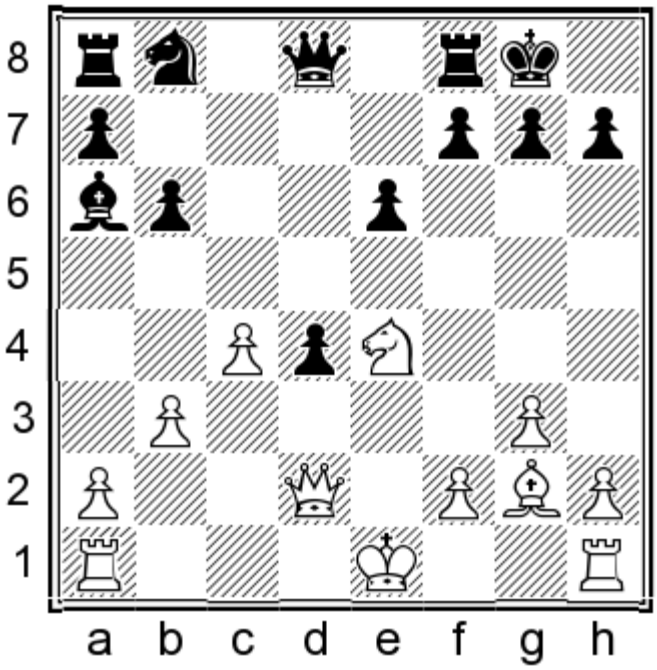
At first sight it's a very risky move, since it weakens the h1–a8 diagonal which the White bishop could penetrate. However, in our current era, engines make many dubious-looking moves possible. 11...♘d7 has appeared more often, e.g. 12.♘xe4 ♘f6 13.♗g2 ♘xe4 14.♗xe4 ♗b7 15.0-0 0-0 16.♖fd1 and White has a small, but long-lasting advantage. Black must remain passive. 16...♕f6 17.♕e3 ♖fd8 18.♖d2 ♖d7 19.♖ad1 g6 20.h4 h5



21.c5! This is a well-known motif to increase the advantage. White fixes the weakness on c6, stops Black's counterplay with c5 and kills the b7 bishop. 21...♖c8 22.a4 ♗a6 23.♖c1 with a clear advantage happened in Tkachiev-Bauer, France 2007.

12.♗g2

12.♘xe4 is White's other option, but Grischuk had likely prepared a nice exchange sacrifice 12...cxd4 13.♗g2 0-0!



White has two different ways to win the exchange, but Black gets enough counterplay in both lines 14.♘g5

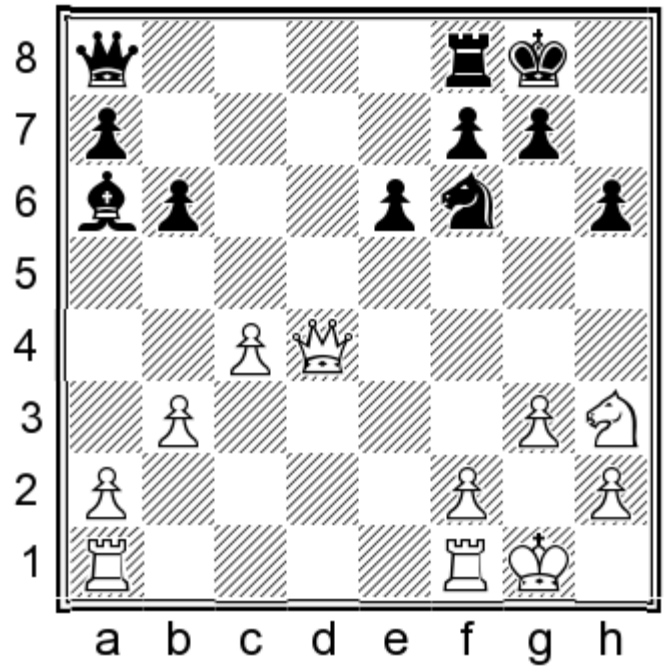
(14.♘f6+ ♕xf6 15.♗xa8 ♕e5+! and if White wants to avoid the perpetual check, he must give up his right to castle 16.♕e2

(*16.♔f1 ♕c5!* In order to put the knight to c6. If White needs to give up his bishop, Black punishes him on the light

squares, so he must retreat, *17.♗f3 ♘c6* and Black got only one pawn for the exchange, but the d4-passer and the superior pieces give more than enough counterplay. In addition, Black cannot connect his rooks with *18.♔g2* because of *18...♘e5* and White must either give up his bishop, or allow Black to occupy the long diagonal.)

16...♕a5+ 17.♕d2 ♕e5+=)

14...♘d7! White must give up his strong bishop, and Black will be able to use the weak light squares with accurate play. 15.♗xa8 ♕xa8 16.0-0 h6! forcing the knight to the unfortunate h3 square. 17.♕xd4 ♘f6 18.♘h3



18...♗b7! This is Grischuk's point! Very deep preparation indeed! Black doesn't even get a pawn for the exchange, but he doesn't need to worry about being worse. Let's examine some concrete variations to understand why this is so... 19.f3 A strange move and probably the best option, but after this it becomes clear that White cannot be better.

a) 19.♘f4 ♘e4! with the idea of ♘g5! 20.♖fd1 (*20.h4 e5! 21.♕xe5 ♘d2* with serious threats on the diagonal.) 20...♘g5 with very unpleasant threats here too.

b) The most logical 19.♖fd1 is met by 19...♕c8!! with the double threat of e5 and ♕c6. White is already in deep trouble. 19...♗xf3 20.♘f4 ♗b7 Black already has a pawn, and wants to play ♕c8-c6, ♖d8 or ♘e4. The position is unclear, but from a practical point of view, it is much easier to play as Black.

12...♘c6 13.dxc5!

The only move, otherwise Black gains a decisive advantage. After 13.♘xe4 Black can sacrifice the exchange in an even better version 13...♘xd4! 14.♘d6+ ♕xd6 15.♗xa8 0-0 16.♗g2 ♕e5+! and Black wins due to the tactical trick: 17.♔f1 ♘xb3! 13.♗xe4 is refuted in similar fashion 13...♘xd4! 14.♗xa8 ♕xa8 White has an extra option now — to castle queenside — but it doesn't help either. 15.0-0-0 h6 16.♘h3 ♗b7! 17.♖hg1 ♗f3! The bishop sends both rooks to bad squares. 18.♖de1 ♗g4! 19.♘f4 0-0 and ♘f3 will follow next move, with a big advantage.

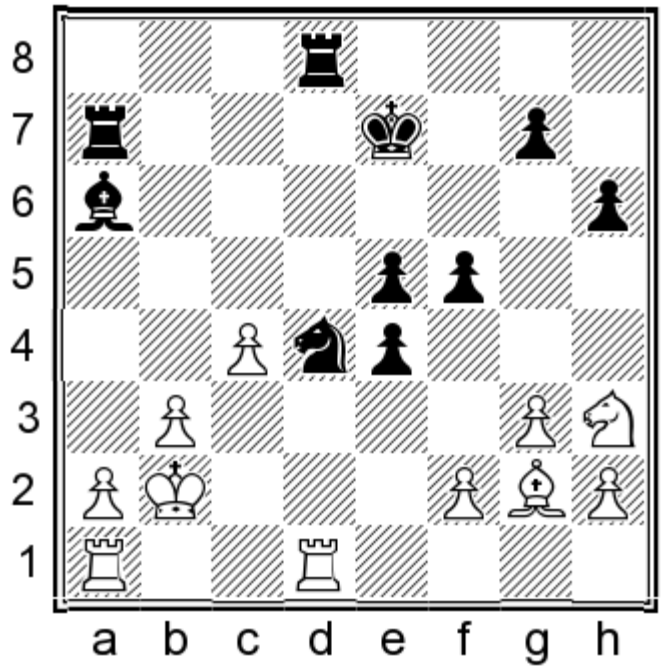
13...♕xd2+ 14.♔xd2

The e4 pawn is the key to Black's position and he must protect it at any cost.

14...f5! 15.♘xe6

Actually, only this was the novelty of the game. There was only one prior game with the 11...c5! idea, which

continued with 15.cxb6 ♔e7! 16.bxa7 ♖hd8+ 17.♔c1 White is a pawn up, but all his pieces are terribly placed and the pawns on the queenside are immobile. Obviously, Black should have enough compensation. 17...h6 (*17...♖xa7* is also fine for Black *18.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 19.♔xd1 ♘d4⇄*) 18.♘h3 ♘d4 19.♖d1 e5 20.♔b2 ♖xa7



21.♖d2 g5! Black's kingside pawns are looking much more dangerous than the ones on the queenside. White tried to improve his knight on h3, but he missed a nice tactical blow: 22.♘g1? ♗xc4!! 23.g4

(with the idea of 23.bxc4 ♖b8+ 24.♔c1 (*24.♔c3 ♖a3#*) 24...♘b3+ wins)

23...♗xb3! 24.♘e2

(*24.axb3 ♖xa1 25.♔xa1 ♘xb3+*)

24...♗a4 and Black soon won in Saric-Riazantsev, Budva 2009.

15...♔f7 16.♘f4

Aronian wanted to control the d3 square in order to be able to move to c3 with the king after the check. 16.♘c7 was an alternative, but Black has no reason to complain after 16...♖ad8+ 17.♔c1 (*17.♔c3 ♖d3+*) 17...♗b7 18.cxb6 axb6 with a similar position to the 15.cxb6 line. White is a pawn up, but Black has enough compensation, mainly due to the g2 bishop and the upcoming ♘d4 move.

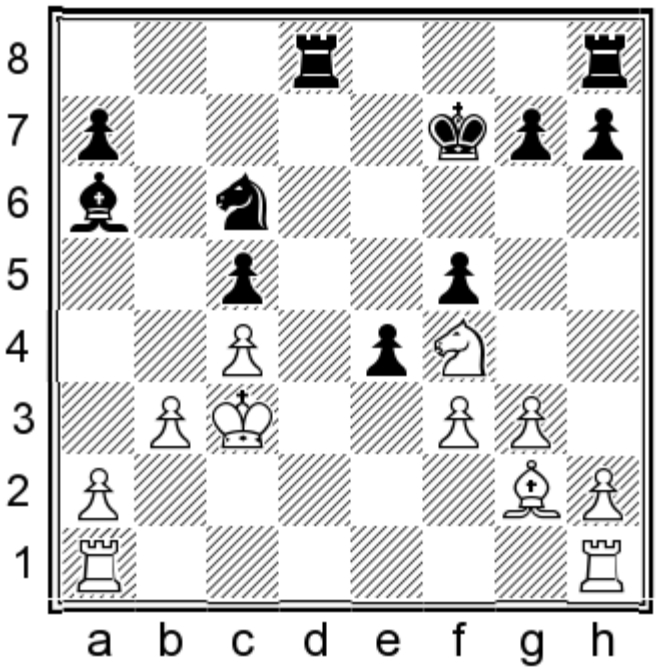
16...bxc5

Finally Black has restored material equality, but he still needs to play precisely to equalize. Aronian sets very difficult problems to solve.

17.f3!

Another very logical move, trying to activate the poor bishop on g2. If White manages to open the diagonal, suddenly a bishop on d5 would start to dominate the position. Black cannot allow this.

17...♖ad8+ 18.♔c3



18...e3!

An excellent decision! Of course it's very logical to close down the g2 bishop, but it had to be deeply calculated because White gets access to the c5 pawn, and the e3 pawn might become weak as well. 18...exf3? 19.♗xf3 ♘d4 20.♗d5+ ♔f6 21.♖ae1 ♗c8 22.b4± and White's dream would have come true.

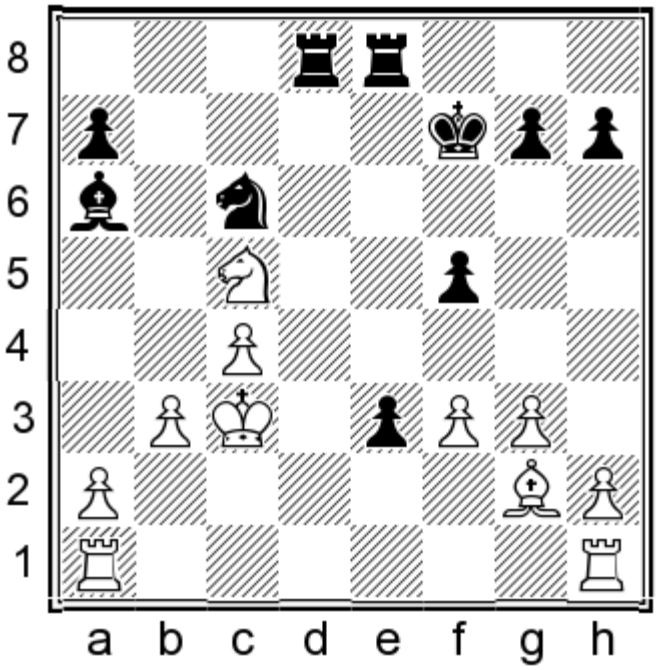
19.♘d3

19.♖he1 ♖he8. 19.♘d5 was an alternative, but Black seems to be fine after 19...♖he8 20.♖he1 e2 21.f4 ♗b7 followed by ♘d4.

19...♖he8!!

Of course, Grischuk had to foresee all these lines and their consequences before pushing e3.

20.♘xc5



20.f4 was an alternative again, but just as in the opening, Black sacrifices an exchange and gets enough compensation 20...e2!! 21.♗d5+

(*21.♗xc6 ♖e3! 22.♗d5+ ♖xd5!* This is the point! *23.cxd5 ♖xd3+ 24.♔b2 ♖xd5* Black has only one pawn, but with such a protected e2 pawn he cannot be worse. It's important for Black to keep his rook on the board so that the most probable outcome of the game will be a draw.)

21...♖xd5! leads to a position similar to the one in the previous line 22.cxd5 ♖e3 23.dxc6 ♖xd3+ 24.♔c2 ♔e7 and again, the game should end in a draw.

20...e2!

The most precise again. 20...♖d2 was a tempting alternative, but White can obtain a small advantage after the subtle 21.♗f1! ♗c8 22.♖e1! ♖xa2 23.♖e2! ♖xe2 24.♗xe2

21.♘xa6 ♖e3+ 22.♔c2

22.♔b2 loses after 22...♖d2+ 23.♔a3 ♘d4! (♘c2 is coming) 24.♘b4 a5! 25.♘d5 e1=♕ 26.♖hxe1 ♖xe1 27.♖xe1 ♘c2+ and wins.

22...♖ed3!!

Grischuk had to calculate up until this moment when he played his 18th move! Already now, Aronian is the one that has to make only moves to achieve a draw.

23.♖ae1!

Of course Aronian is also a great player, and finds the only way to draw.

23...♖d2+ 24.♔c1!

24.♔b1 leads to problems for White after 24...♖d1+! 25.♔b2 ♖8d2+! and after both king moves, ♘d4 sets huge problems for White. For example: 26.♔c3 ♘d4 27.f4 (*27.♘c5 ♖c2+ 28.♔b4 ♖cc1*) 27...♖d3+ 28.♔b2 ♖xe1 29.♖xe1

♖d1.

24...♖xa2!

Preparing for the invasion of the 2nd rank. Aronian has to find another only move...

25.f4!

25.♘c5? loses elegantly to 25...♖dd2 26.f4 ♘b4! 27.♗d5+ ♘xd5 28.cxd5 ♖ab2! with a mate threat.

25...♖dd2! 26.♗xc6 ♖ac2+

26...♖ab2 leads to a draw as well 27.♘b4 a5 28.♗f3 axb4 29.♖xe2 and Black gives perpetual check again 29...♖bc2+ 30.♔b1 ♖b2+=

27.♔b1 ♖b2+ 28.♔a1 ♖a2+

A fantastic game! All the lines after 11...c5 are more or less forced and at the end it seems to be perfectly fine for Black. This means that the 4...♗b4 setup is playable! Congratulations to both players!

1/2

GAME 8
A. Naiditsch (2700)
P. Leko (2730)
40th GM Dortmund GER (9)
22.07.2012, [B12]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We are in the last round of the Dortmund Super-Tournament. Five players are sharing the lead with 5/8, among these my opponent and me. What a dramatic last round!

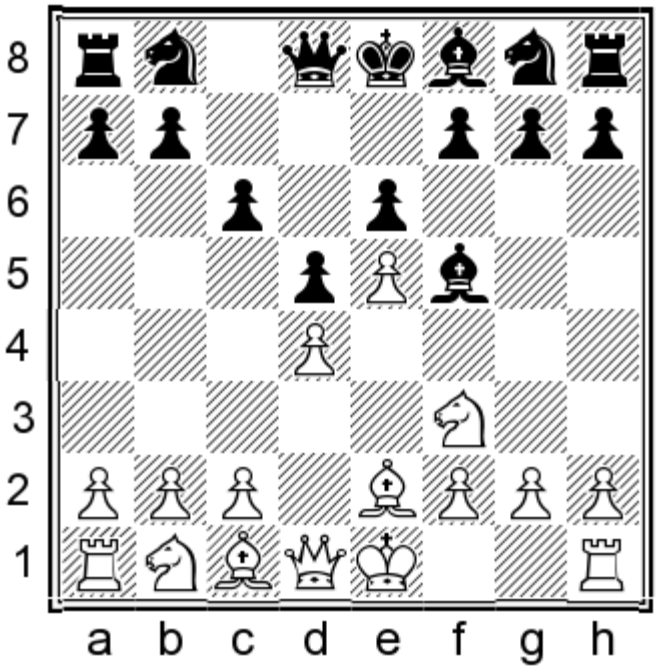
1.e4 c6

Usually, Leko uses the Marshall as his main weapon. I was a bit surprised by his opening choice...

2.d4 d5 3.e5

My main opening against the Caro-Kann is the Panov Attack, but I felt that I would not be able to create any problems for Black. It’s very well known that Leko’s preparation is extremely good.

3...♗f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♗e2



5...♘e7

A relatively rare move. We see the line with 5...c5 more often.

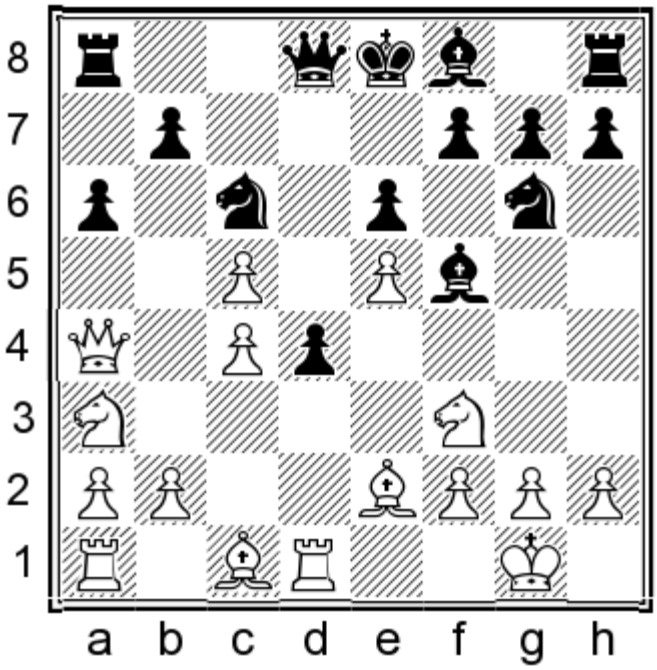
6.0-0 c5 7.c4

Before this move I had to think a little bit and try to remember some lines. Luckily, I had analyzed this position for one of my Chess Evolution books, but the funny thing is that the game on which I based my analysis was Leko-Roiz! During the game I really hoped that Leko didn't have a big trick up his sleeve.

7...♘bc6 8.♘a3

This move is the idea behind the c4 push. Now 8...dxc4 9.♘xc4 ♘d5 10.♗g5 probably leads to a slightly better position for White.

8...a6 9.dxc5 d4 10.♕a4 ♘g6 11.♖d1



Up to this point both Peter and I had made our moves quite quickly and were still following the game Leko-Roiz.

11...d3!?

And here comes the difference which disappointed me. I expected Leko to repeat his earlier game, in which I had some improvement in mind. 11...♗xc5 12.b4 ♗a7 (*12...♗xb4 13.g4!* seems to bring White a serious advantage.) 13.c5 0-0 14.♘c4 ♗e4 15.♗e3 d3 16.♘e1 ♕d5 17.♘d6 ♘gxe5 with a complicated, but probably equal position. Leko-Roiz, 2011 World Team Championship.

12.b4

N I thought for a long time before playing b4. 12.♗e3!? could be another interesting choice, but 12.♗xd3 doesn't give White any advantage, e.g. 12...♗xd3 13.♕b3 ♗xc5 14.♖xd3 ♕c7 and Black is winning back the e5 pawn when the position should be equal.

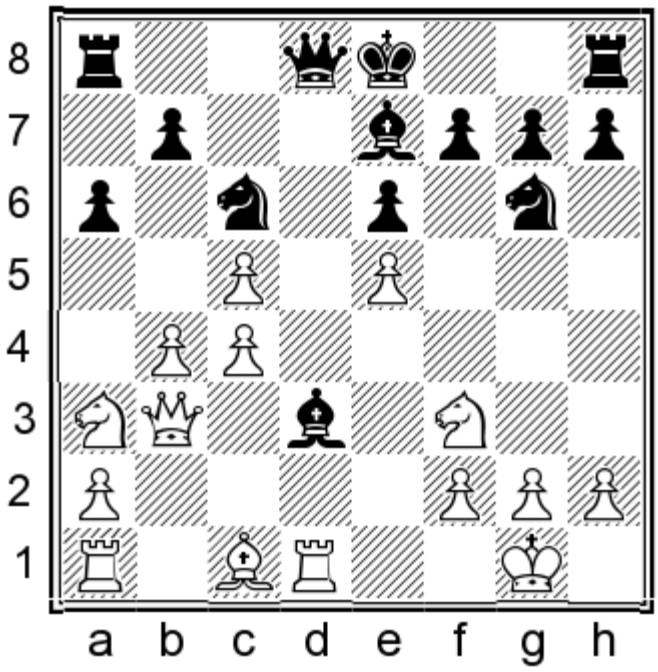
12...♗e7

Played quite quickly by Peter. So, my opponent was not really surprised by my move 12.b4, and it seems that 12.b4 is a novelty! Amazingly deep preparation by Leko!

13.♗xd3

The most logical move and the beginning of some exchanges. 13.♕b3 This move gives away the e5 pawn and, with it, probably any chances to be better. 13...♘gxe5 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.♗b2 ♗f6 and Black is doing perfectly fine.

13...♗xd3 14.♕b3



White is winning back the piece.

14...♘cxe5 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5 16.♗b2 ♕c7 17.♗xe5

Of course not 17.f4? ♗xc5+! 18.bxc5 ♕xc5+ 19.♔h1 ♘g4 and Black is winning.

17...♕xe5 18.♕xd3

After a mass exchange of pieces, White seems to be a pawn up. But things are not so clear at all; the Black bishop is a very strong piece and the White knight still needs to find a good place. Besides, Black will quickly start some play against the White pawns on the queenside.

18...0-0 19.♘c2

Here I had no choice, I needed to bring my knight back into the game.

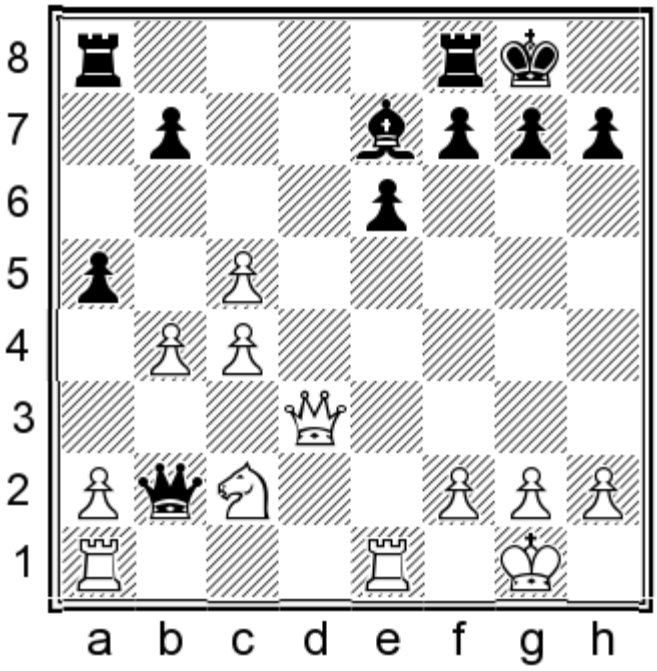
19...a5

Black needs to open the a-file.

20.♖e1!?

It took me a while to realize that perhaps I was not actually better at all. Let’s take a look at the logical 20.a3 ♖fd8! when Black brings the rook to the important d-file with a tempo. 21.♕b3 Not a pleasant spot for the White queen, but where else to go?! 21...axb4 22.axb4 ♖xa1 23.♖xa1 ♗f6 I am still a pawn up, but what to do next? My queenside pawns are blocked and it seems almost impossible to mobilize them. The Black pieces are all very active and Black has a clear plan of improvement with h5-h4, starting to put pressure on my king. I think only White is at risk of getting in trouble here. Black is perfectly fine!

20...♕b2!



A very strong move by Leko! The idea of this move is to bring the White rook from the a- to the b-file, in order to free the a-file for the Black rook. 20...♕f6 would be a normal move too. 21.a3 ♖fd8 22.♕e3 ♕b2 23.♕e4 might lead to the same position that we arrived at in the game.

21.a3

I had no choice. I needed to maintain my pawn structure.

21...♖fd8 22.♕e4

In case of 22.♕e2?! ♕c3! Black enters the second rank. 23.♖ad1 axb4 24.axb4 ♖a2 and probably Black is better.

22...axb4 23.♖ab1

Not a nice move to make, but a necessary one. 23.axb4? would have been a horrible blunder. 23...♖xa1 24.♖xa1 ♕xa1+! 25.♘xa1 ♖d1+ and I would get mated.

23...♕f6 24.axb4 ♖a2

Another interesting moment. Where to put the White rook from e1? To e2 or to f1? The position is becoming increasingly sharp and every move could be decisive. It looks like I will get the b7 pawn, and Black is clearly going to base his counterplay on the strong rook on a2.

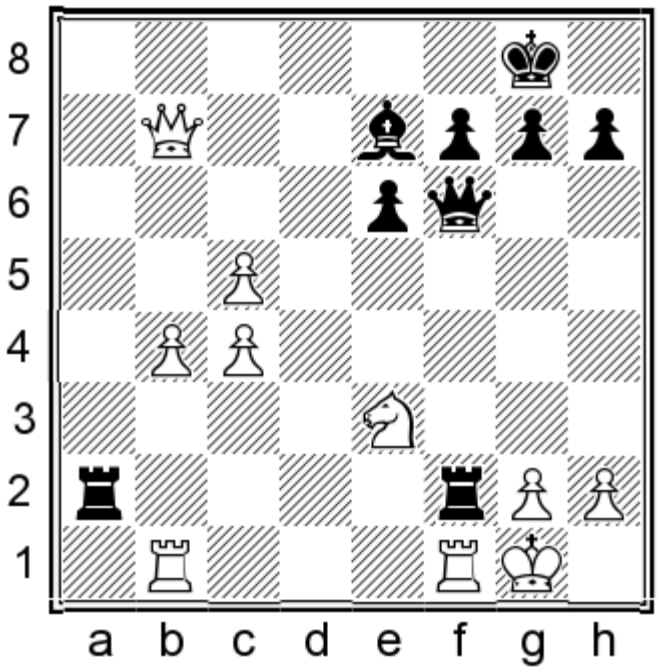
25.♖f1

25.♖e2 ♕c3! This strong move gives Black great play. He wants to play ♖d2. 26.♘e1 It looks like I have nothing better than this. 26...♖xe2 27.♕xe2 ♖d4 and Black is winning the c4-pawn, obtaining a good position in the process.

25...♖d2

Things start to look quite dangerous for White, but on the other hand, if I get the b7 pawn I might just be winning.

26.♘e3 ♖xf2 27.♕xb7



After some thought I took the b7 pawn. I believed I needed just one more move to be perfectly fine: to play ♕b8 followed by ♕g3 and it seems like all my pieces are protected. In the event of winning this game I would share first place in the tournament and take the first prize on tie-break! However, Leko crushed my dreams with an amazing idea!

27...♕f4!!

what a fantastic move, with a very spectacular drawing idea.

28.♕xe7

I played this with a slightly sad feeling, but what to do...? Nothing is achieved by: 28.♖xf2 ♕xf2+ 29.♔h1 ♖e2! It's important for Black to push the White knight to f1 first. 30.♘f1 and only now to play 30...♖b2! Too many bits are hanging in White's position, and I will probably lose all my extra pawns on the queenside. It's clear that I have no chances to play for a win!

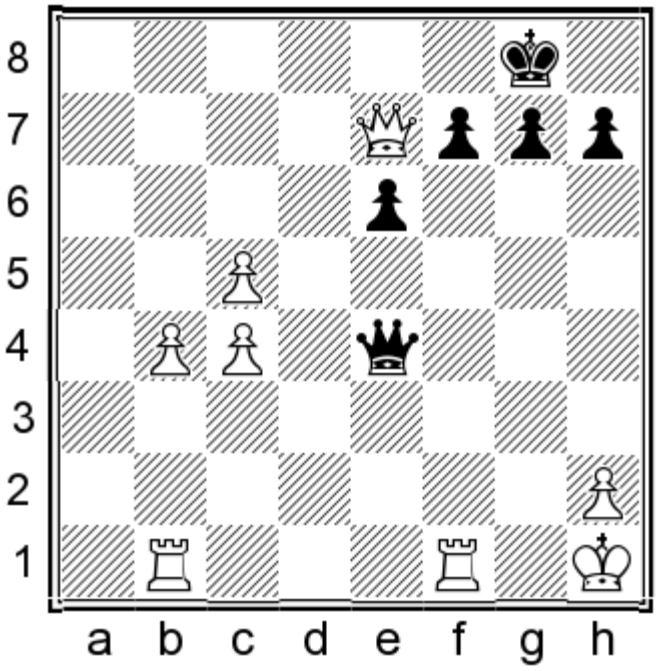
28...♖xg2+!

The key move of Black's drawing idea.

29.♘xg2 ♖xg2+ 30.♔xg2 ♕g4+

My king can't escape from the checks on the 4th rank. What a beautiful draw.

31.♔h1 ♕e4+



32.♔g1 ♕g4+ 33.♔f2 ♕f4+ 34.♔e2 ♕e4+ 35.♔d2 ♕d4+ 36.♔e2 ♕e4+ 37.♔d2 ♕d4+ 38.♔e2

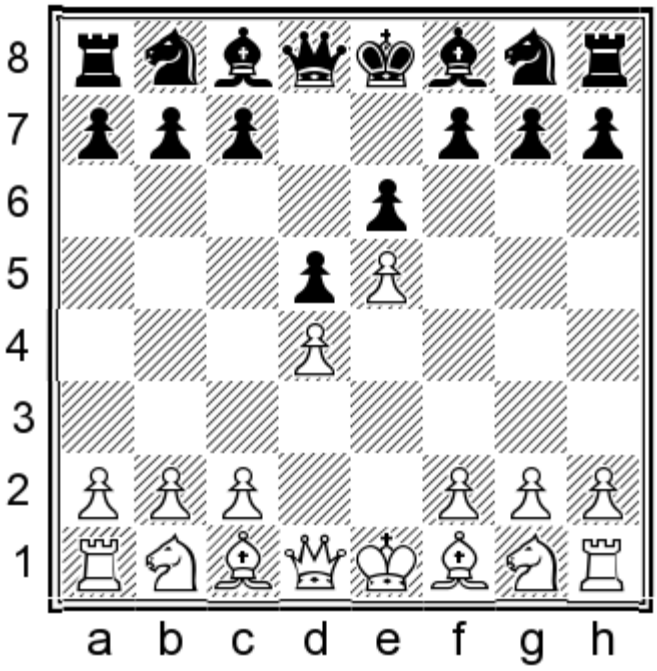
With this result, we both shared 3rd-6th place.

1/2

GAME 9
P. Svidler (2749)
N. Vitiugov (2705)
65th ch-RUS Moscow RUS (8)
11.08.2012, [C02]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

In this game we'll see that even top players can sometimes miss a mate in 4 moves! Vitiugov, who is probably one of the biggest experts on the French currently (although his results have not been that great lately) shows us how dynamic this opening can be. Svidler evidently misunderstands the position from the beginning and quickly falls under a mating attack. Let's take a look at this very interesting game!

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5



Svidler tries a move that he hasn’t played lately. 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♗e3 This is clearly the most popular line at the moment. Vitiugov and Potkin showed that things here are far from clear. For those who are interested in the line, the game from the current Russian Championship Grischuk-Potkin is very interesting from the opening point of view.

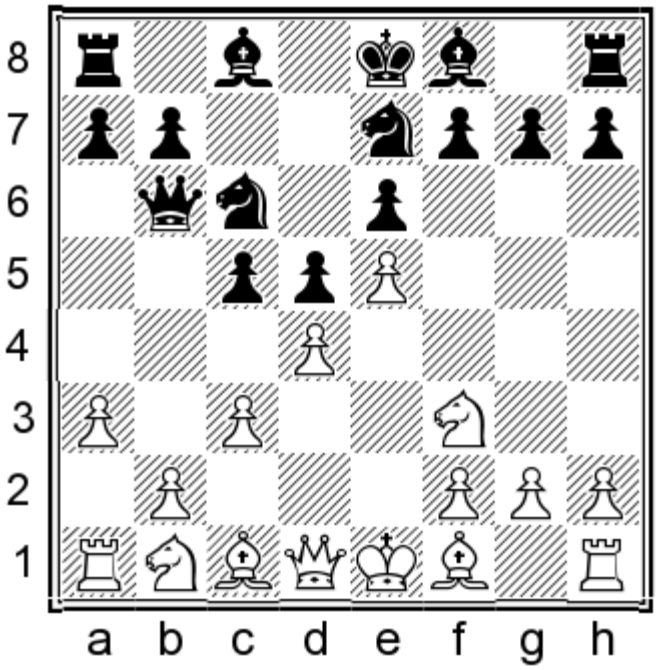
3...c5 4.c3 ♕b6 5.♘f3 ♘c6

We are now in the main position of the 3.e5 line.

6.a3

The main move as well. The ideas of both White and Black are quite simple. White tries to be solid in the center, usually trying to push b4 and to hold the central pawns, while Black tries to play against the White center, especially against the pawn on d4.

6...♘ge7!?



An interesting and rare move which leads to a fighting position. Black usually plays 6...♘h6 7.b4 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘f5 9.♗b2 and the results show that White is doing a bit better here. 6...c4 This is another option in this position, but I think that White should be somewhat better here.

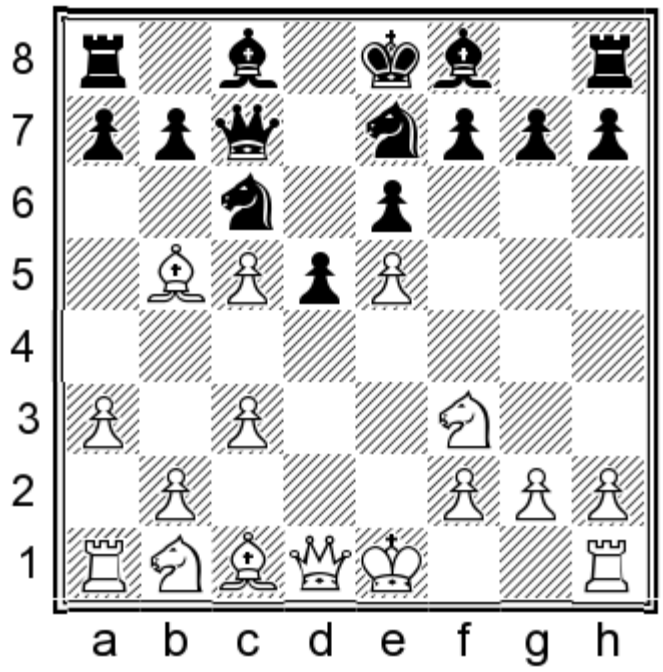
7.dxc5!?

I guess Svidler was very surprised by 6...♘ge7 and tried to make use of it immediately. It would be interesting to see what Vitiugov had in mind against 7.b4 cxb4 8.cxb4. In case of 8...♘f5, we would be back to the main-line position via a slightly different move order.

7...♕c7!

A strong reaction. If he simply took: 7...♕xc5, then 8.b4! A typical move in these French structures. White quickly gets active with 8...♕b6 9.c4 ♕c7 10.♗b2 and White is in time for ♗b2, which is very important. We can see that White is more active here and even though the position is far from clear, the advantage should be on his side.

8.♗b5



The only move for White to hold the pawn on e5.

8...♗d7!?

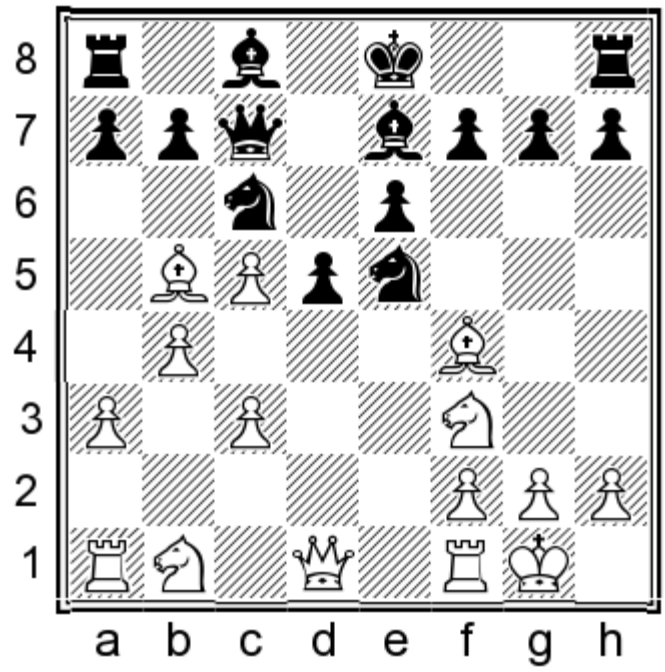
Another strong move by Vitiugov. Black doesn't care about winning the pawn back immediately, but instead tries to play with a better development. 8...♘g6 This was the other choice Black had. Now the pawns on e5 and c5 are hanging...one of them is going to fall. 9.b4! It's very typical for this structure to hold on to the c5 pawn. If White allows Black to take with ...♗xc5, Black would stand perfectly.

(*9.*♕*d4* An attempt to hold both pawns would end in nothing. *9...b6!* At first sight it's a very strange move, but it's a typical motif as well. Black uses the bad position of the White queen on d4 to develop all his pieces and enjoy flexible and accelerated play. *10.cxb6 axb6* Black creates a double threat: to play ...♗c5 and win the c5 pawn, or to play ...♗a6 and force White to play ♗xc6, after which all the white squares would feel very empty. *11.b4* ♗*a6 12.*♗*xc6+* ♕*xc6* And we have reached a position where Black has good compensation for the pawn. The next few Black moves could be ...♗e7, ...0-0 and ...f6! The White king on e1 will feel quite uncomfortable very soon.)

9...♘gxe5 10.0-0!

(Not working is *10.*♗*f4* ♘*d3+! 11.*♕*xd3* ♕*xf4 12.0-0* ♗*e7* and Black has a nice position.)

10...♗e7 11.♗f4



and I think White is more active.

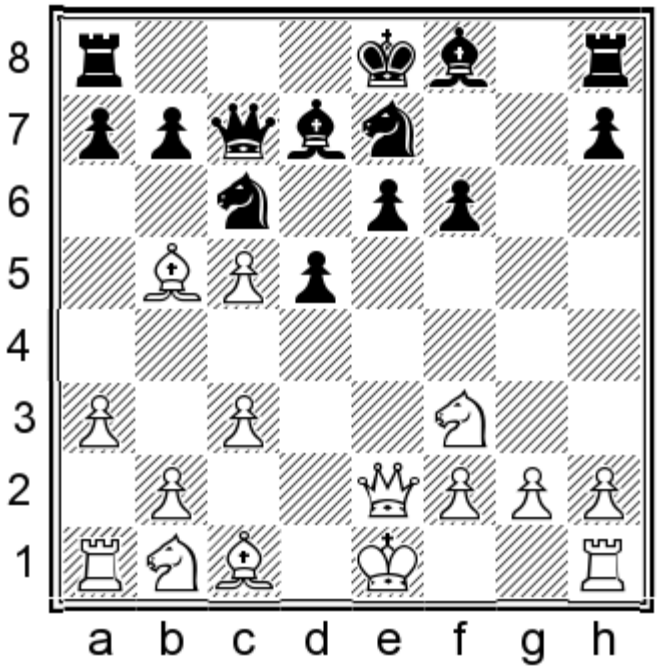
9.♕e2

If you want to protect the extra pawn, then do it until the end! The divestment of the pawn would lead to an uncomfortable position for White. 9.0-0 ♘xe5 10.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 11.b4 g6! and the Black bishop finds a way out through g7. 12.♘d4 a6 and Black is doing fine here. Moreover, I think White needs to be quite careful to avoid getting in trouble. If Black manages to play ...♗g7, ...0-0 and ...e5, his center will be just huge!

9...f6

Very creative play by Black, but I think that a much simpler and more logical move would leave him with a great position : 9...♘g6! There's no reason not to attack the pawn on e5 one more time! 10.♗xc6 The only move to hold the e5-pawn. In all other cases Black would play ♘cxe5 or ♘gxe5 with a great position. 10...♗xc6 11.b4 ♗e7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗b2 It seems that White is just a pawn up. Where is Black's play?! 13...f6! Black is crushing the rest of what's left of the White center. All the Black pieces are suddenly standing on just the right positions and he is clearly the one who is pushing here!

10.exf6 gxf6



11.♘bd2?!

The right idea, but clearly the wrong move order. 11.c4! This is the correct way to act against the Black central pawns. 11...d4 (*11...0-0-0 12.♘c3!* and we can clearly see why the move 11.♘bd2 was wrong. The White knight on c3 is a beast! If Black pushes d4, White always has the maneuver ♘e4-♘d6.) 12.♘bd2 followed by ♘e4-♘d6. The position remains complicated, but in my opinion, the advantage should be on White's side.

11...0-0-0

Black is going to play for the initiative.

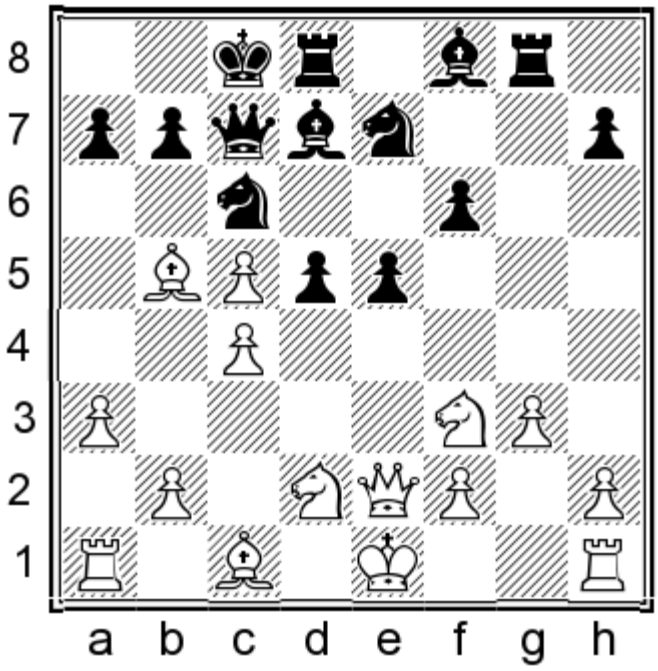
12.c4 ♖g8!

A very nice move by Black, fighting against the White pawn structure in a very unpleasant way. The White knight on d2 is suddenly a very bad piece that only has one move, ♘b3, which looks quite senseless. To castle short is very dangerous, Black could counter with e5! We can see how, in 2 moves, White found himself in trouble from a better position.

13.g3

13.0-0 e5! The Black central pawns are very strong now. 14.cxd5 ♘xd5 15.♘b3 ♗h3 and White is on the verge of standing worse.

13...e5!



Of course! Black shows why he played 9...f6.

14.cxd5

Not a pleasant move to make, but there's no other way to defend against Black's e4 threat.

14...♘xd5

It's amazing to see what happened to White's position in merely 5 moves!

15.♘b3 ♗g4

Not a bad move, but Black had another nice attacking option. 15...e4! Black uses the bad position of the White king with immediate action. 16.♘fd2 (*16.♗xc6* Not making place for the knight on d4 doesn't work due to *16...exf3! 17.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 18.♕xf3 ♖e8+* and Black is winning.) 16...♗h3! keeping the White king in the center. All the Black pieces are ready to attack and it's hard to imagine White surviving it.

16.♕c2?!

This was the last moment to think about castling which would be a good move in a bad position. 16.0-0 a6 17.♗c4 ♗xc5 18.♖d1! and White is still in the game, even if the position is very dangerous (*18.♘xc5 ♘d4*)

16...♘f4!

Black had a lot of nice moves here, but Vitiugov chooses the most spectacular one, and probably one of the best options as well. The simple 16...♔b8 17.♗e2 ♕f7 would also lead to a horrible position for White.

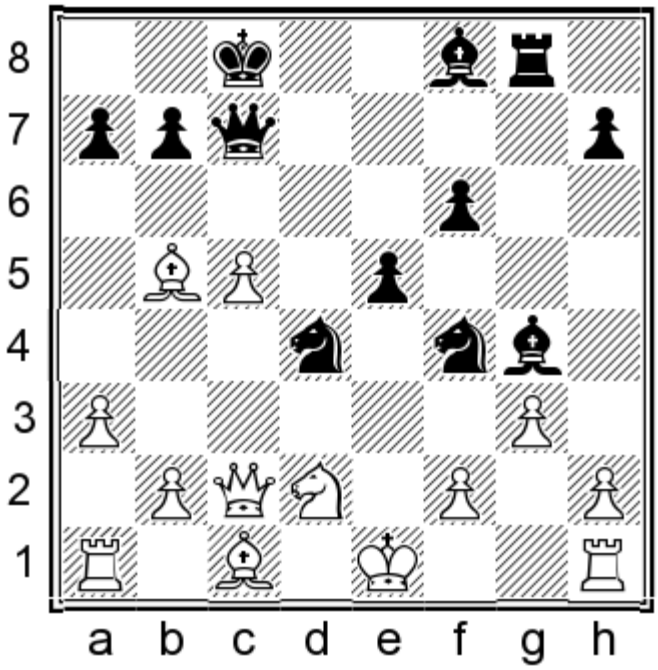
17.♘bd2

What a position! We will rarely see Black crushing White like this after just 17 moves! 17.♗xf4? would allow Black to play 17...♗xf3 and the game is over. It isn't much better to play 17.♘fd2 ♘g2+ 18.♔f1 ♗h3 19.♔g1 ♕d7 and White is in a totally bad situation. It's hard even to find a move for White! Black should just be winning here.

17...♖xd2!

“No mercy for White” says Vituigov, in a position with at least 10 moves which lead to a clear advantage for Black!

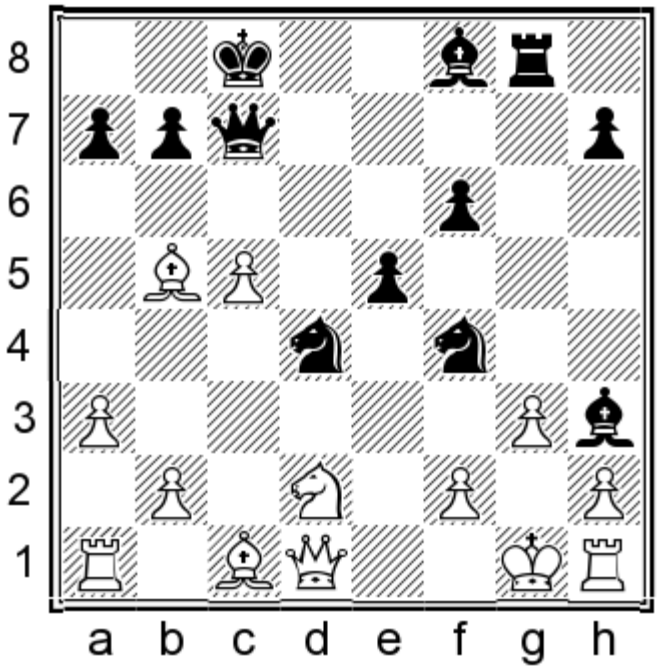
18.♘xd2 ♘d4



It’s really beautiful to see how the Black pieces dominate the game.

19.♕a4 ♗xc5

Black continues his very “pretty” play. Sometimes one of the hardest things is to choose a move in a position where it looks like everything should win. 19...♘g2+! This move would end White’s suffering on the spot. 20.♔f1 ♗h3 21.♔g1 ♘f4! The mate on e2 decides the game. 22.♕d1



22...♕c6! would be a fantastic finish to the game!

20.gxf4

If death is inevitable, then at least be a rook up!

20...exf4!

Now Black wants to finish White off with a check on the e-file.

21.♘e4 ♘f3+?

This move allows the entire Black advantage to slip away. 21...♕e7! follows the correct plan of using the e-file. 22.♗d3 f5 Cool and strong. Black is winning some material back, and continues his attack against the White king. 23.♗xf4 fxe4 24.♗c4 ♖f8 Just an exchange down for such an attack — a dream position for every attacking player. Objectively, Black should win very soon.

22.♔f1

Only move.

22...♗h3+ 23.♔e2

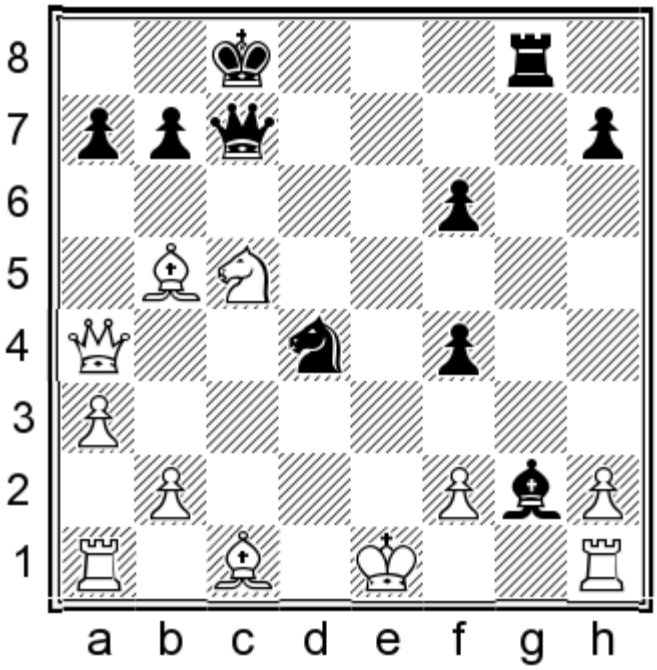
Only move.

23...♘d4+ 24.♔e1

Only move.

24...♗g2 25.♕c4??

After 4 only moves, White makes a terrible mistake. 25.♘xc5!



The only move to continue the fight! It looks very dangerous of course, but White should not be dreaming of cakes and candies! 25...♕xc5 (*25...♕e5+ 26.♔d2* and it seems like White is doing fine! *25...♗xh1?? 26.♗d7+ ♔b8 27.♕xd4+–*) 26.♕c4! Probably the only move that saves White. 26...♖e8+ 27.♔d2 A rook move is a rook move, and this is what gives White just enough time to escape. 27...♕xc4 (*27...♖e2+* It seems that White is doing fine in this forced line as well. *28.♔d1 ♕xc4 29.♗xc4 ♖c2 30.♗d3 ♗f3+ 31.♔e1 ♗xh1 32.♔f1 ♗d5 33.♗xf4* with about an equal endgame.) 28.♗xc4 ♗xh1 29.♔c3! and again, just in time to recover the pawn on f4, probably with a draw.

25...♖d8!

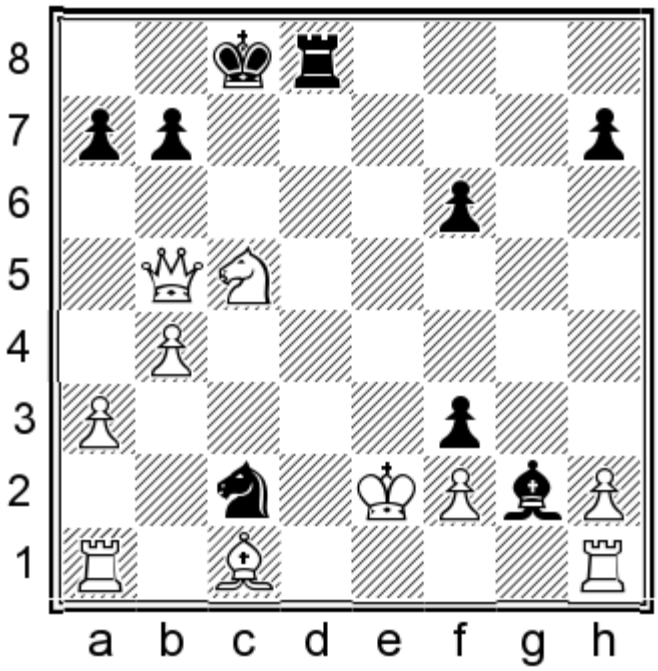
And the evaluation is: Black is winning! White can't escape from a deadly net around his king. Besides, Black just wants to play ♗xe4 winning the material back.

26.♘xc5

The only move for White, but it gives Black a chance for a very beautiful mate!

26...♘f3+?

Oh no! With only a few minutes on the clock, Vitiugov again misses how to finish his opponent! 26...♕a5+! Not a difficult, but a very spectacular, combination. 27.b4 ♕xb5 28.♕xb5 ♘c2+ 29.♔e2 f3#

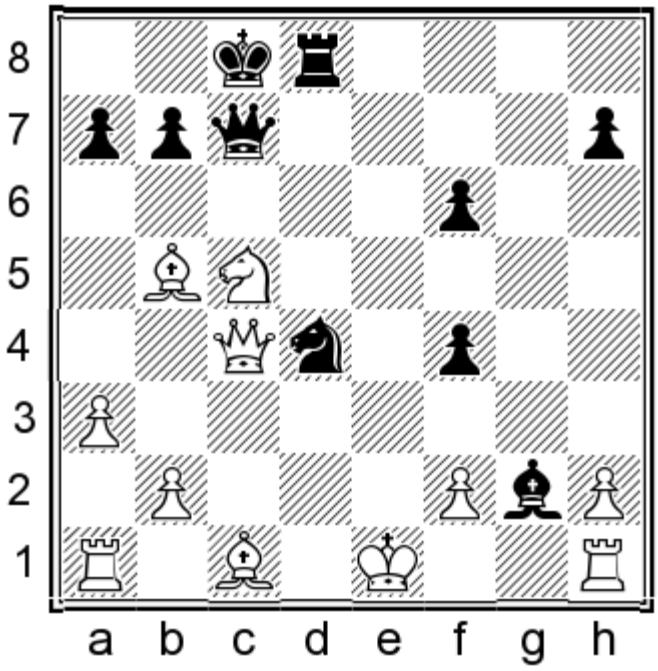


Wow, what a mate!

27.♔e2 ♘d4+ 28.♔e1 ♘f3+

And a double: oh noooo! It was still not too late for ♕a5.

29.♔e2 ♘d4+ 30.♔e1



An amazingly lucky draw for Peter Svidler. All in all, Black clearly dominated the game and played in great style, but simply couldn't finish his opponent off. I guess Vitiugov gained a few extra gray hairs after he returned to his room and switched on the computer, which told him: You missed a mate in 4! I can only repeat myself: Chess is a tough game!

1/2

GAME 10
A. Shirov (2718)
R. Appel (2525)
Schachbundesliga 2012/2013 (9.4)
23.02.2013, [B03]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

A nice tactical fight. Alexei Shirov was heading for complications, where he feels at home, but his much lower-rated opponent was ready for the challenge; after calculating everything precisely, the game ended in a well-deserved draw.

1.e4 ♘f6

Appel's favorite opening — the Alekhine Defense.

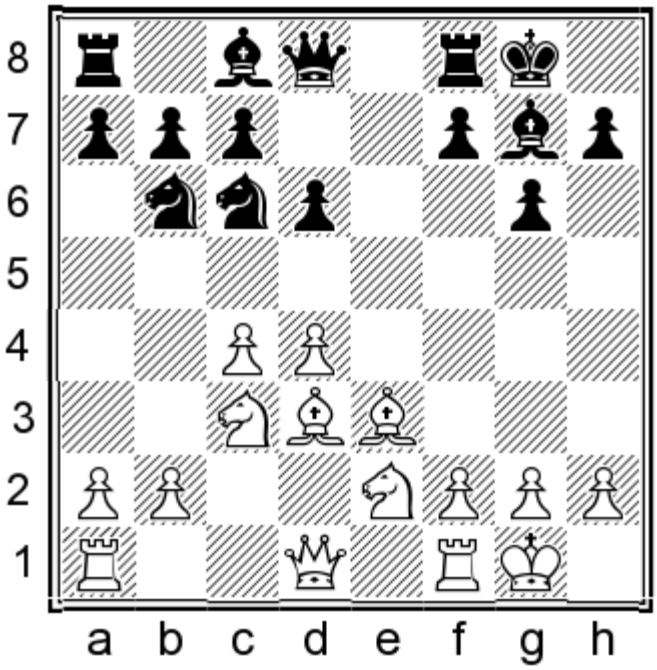
2.e5 ♘d5 3.d4 d6 4.c4

4.♘f3 is the other huge main line.

4...♘b6 5.exd6 exd6

White has various different setups for his pieces. Shirov decided to develop his knight to e2. Another plan is ♘f3, ♗d3 and h3 to prevent the pin with ♗g4.

6.♗d3 ♘c6 7.♘e2 g6 8.♘bc3 ♗g7 9.♗e3 0-0 10.0-0



Both sides have finished their development logically. White has a space advantage thanks to his nice center, while Black has to find a plan against it. The following motif is standard in this variation.

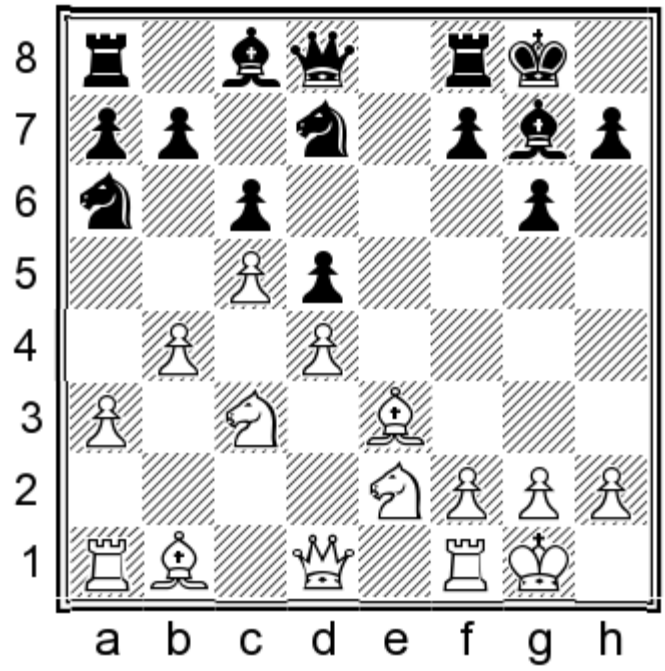
10...♘b4 11.b3

White would like to preserve his bishop, but first he needed to protect the c4 pawn.

11...c6

Taking the bishop pair with 11...♘xd3 was also possible, followed by the same plan as in the game. 12.♕xd3 c6 with ...d5 next was also perfectly playable.

12.♗b1 d5 13.c5 ♘d7 14.a3 ♘a6 15.b4



White seems to have a pleasant advantage on the queenside, but actually, Black is ready to undermine the pawn chain.

15...♘c7

Black first improves his knight by transferring it to e6, and then plays ...b6 and ...a5.

16.♗d3 ♘e6 17.♕d2 b6 18.♖ad1!

An incredibly deep move by Shirov. At first sight, it looks very strange. It is hard to get the point regarding what the rook is doing on the d-file. However, Shirov knew exactly what his opponent was going to do and prepared an idea against it...

18...a5

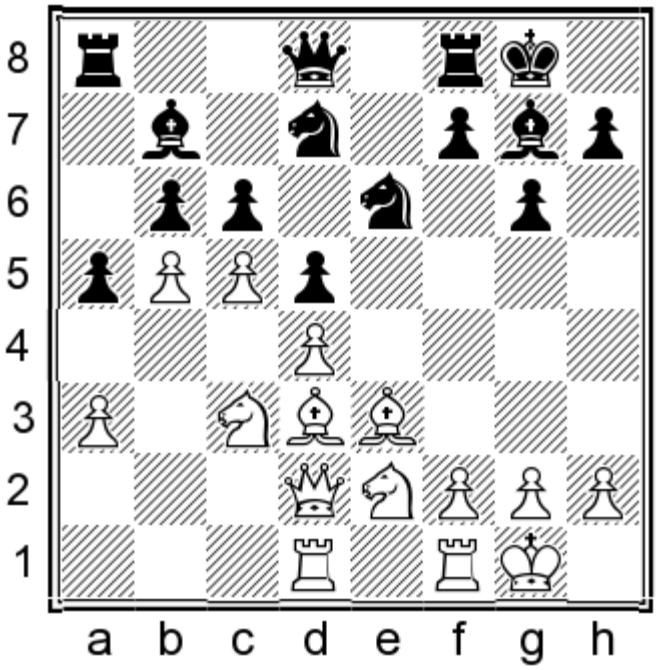
Black's plan is known from many other openings where similar pawn structures arise. He is intending to exchange his poor light-squared bishop on a6.

19.b5!

This was Shirov's idea behind the previous rook move. Suddenly, the locked center opens up and the d1 rook perfectly supports White in the forthcoming complications.

19...♗b7!

Black also prepares his pieces for the action.



From the following 7 pairs of moves, 12 moves will be captures. 19...bxc5 leads to a slightly worse position after 20.bxc6 cxd4 21.cxd7 ♕xd7 22.♘xd4 ♘xd4 23.♗b1 and White takes on d5 next. His active pieces guarantee him an edge.

20.♘xd5

True to his style, Shirov initiates a tactical struggle by opening the position with this temporary sacrifice. 20.bxc6 ♗xc6 21.cxb6 ♘xb6= would have been balanced.

20...bxc5

Black goes for the sharpest continuation. 20...cxd5 would have been much calmer, with a more-or-less balanced game after 21.c6 ♗c8 22.cxd7 ♗xd7.

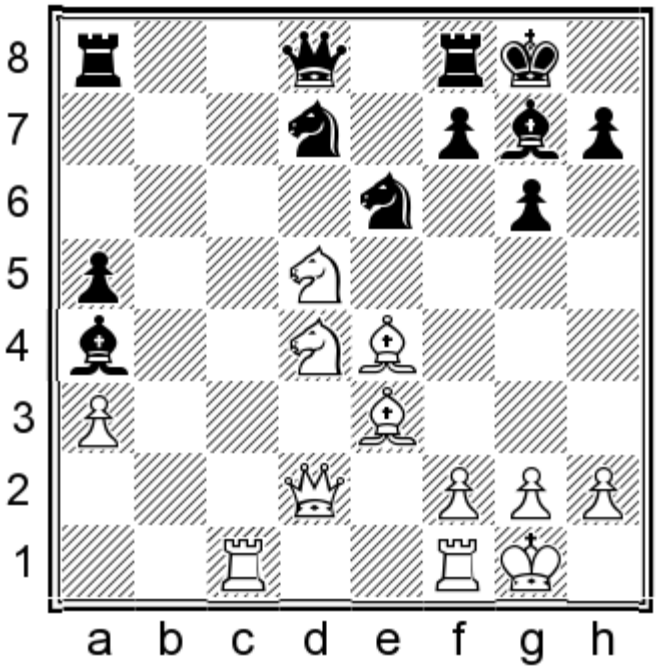
21.bxc6 ♗xc6 22.♗e4

We can see again that the d1 rook is perfectly placed. Both sides have prepared their pieces for the real action, so let's enjoy the complications.

22...♗a4!

A difficult move. Black was disturbed by the d1 rook, but this gives free rein to the e4 bishop on the h1–a8 diagonal. The move is only justified by concrete lines. A mass of exchanges on d4 would have led to White's advantage: 22...cxd4 23.♘xd4 ♘xd4 24.♗xd4 ♗xd4 25.♕xd4 and White's pieces are dominating.

23.♖c1 cxd4 24.♘xd4



24...♘dc5!

Suddenly, all the pieces are hanging. Both players need to be careful not to miss any tactical ideas. 24...♘xd4? 25.♗xd4 ♗xd4 26.♕xd4 was still bad for Black.

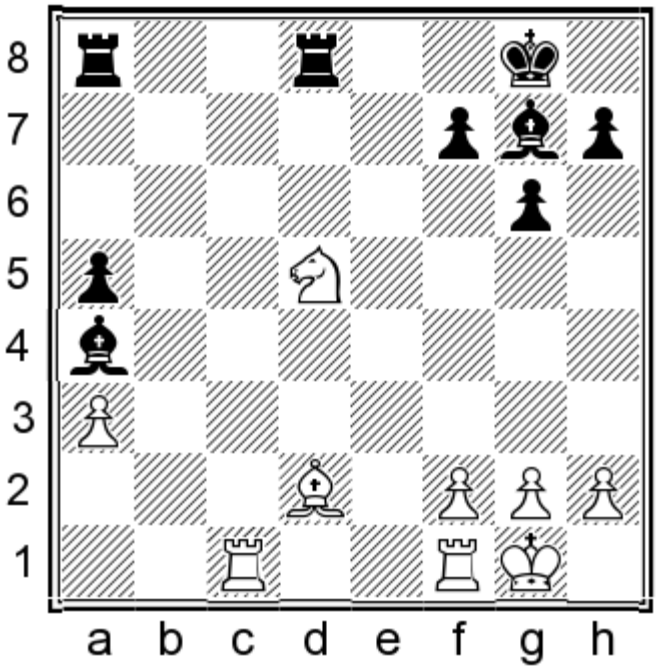
25.♘xe6!

The seemingly logical 25.♗f3? just drops a piece after 25...♗xd4! 26.♗xd4 ♘b3!–+

25...♘xe4!

Counterattacking the queen! 25...♘xe6 leads to a bad position. 26.♘b6! with a double attack against a8 and a4, but Black can save the piece with 26...♕xd2 27.♗xd2 ♖ad8 but he ends up a pawn down after 28.♗xa5.

26.♘xd8 ♘xd2 27.♗xd2 ♖fxd8!



The overall picture is becoming clearer now, but even with the small number of pieces on the board, both sides have a lot of tricks. At first sight, Black has allowed the fork after ♘b6, but he had something in mind. 27...♖axd8 would have dropped the a5 pawn after 28.♘e7+ ♔h8 29.♗xa5.

28.♘b6 ♗b5!

Yet another counterattack!

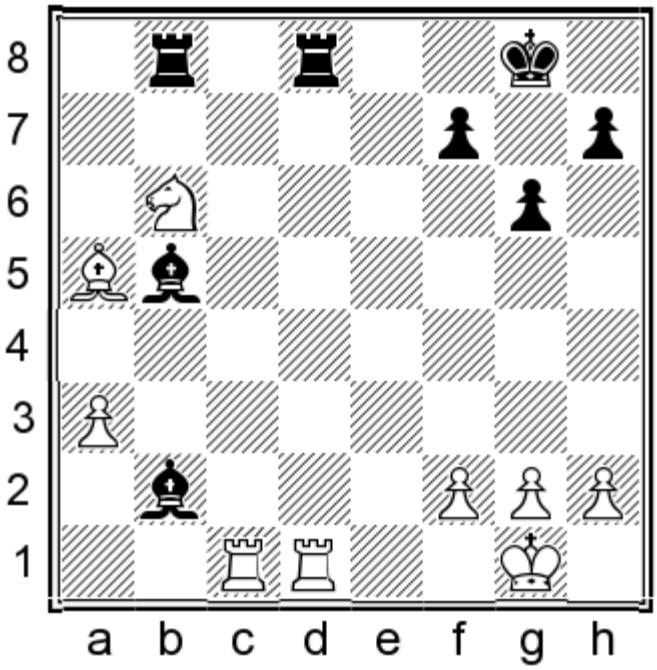
29.♖fd1

29.♘xa8 ♗xf1 30.♔xf1 ♖xd2 31.♖c8+ ♗f8 is slightly better for Black. The bishop is stronger than the knight with pawns on both flanks. The a3 pawn becomes a real target.

29...♖ab8

Black continues to play in tactical fashion and sacrifices his a5 pawn. 29...♖a7 was a calmer way to equality.

30.♗xa5 ♗b2



Black wins back the pawn, but he walks into many tactical motifs with his bishops on the b-file and the pin from a5-d8.

31.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 32.♖b1 ♗xa3!

The main problem White faces is his back-rank. He can never take on b5 while the rook threatens to come to d1.

33.♘c4!

Another spectacular move, attacking two pieces at once, but Black is ready to protect them.

33...♖d3! 34.♘e5

34.♘xa3 ♖xa3 A draw is inevitable as the b5 bishop is still indirectly protected.

34...♖d5 35.♘g4

The last trick from Shirov, but his opponent was in excellent tactical shape and nicely neutralized all the Latvian's attempts to win the game.

35...♗b2! 36.h3

White finally opens the back-rank and is ready to leave with the rook, but Black is in time to play...

36...♗d3 37.♖xb2 ♖xa5

and the draw was agreed! A great fight! Special congratulations to Appel, who dared to play in such brave fashion against Shirov.

1/2

GAME 11
L.J. McShane (2713)
A. Volokitin (2724)
Schachbundesliga 2012/2013 (10.1)
24.02.2013, [B90]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

A very sharp game, which is also important from a theoretical point of view.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e3 ♘g4 7.♗c1

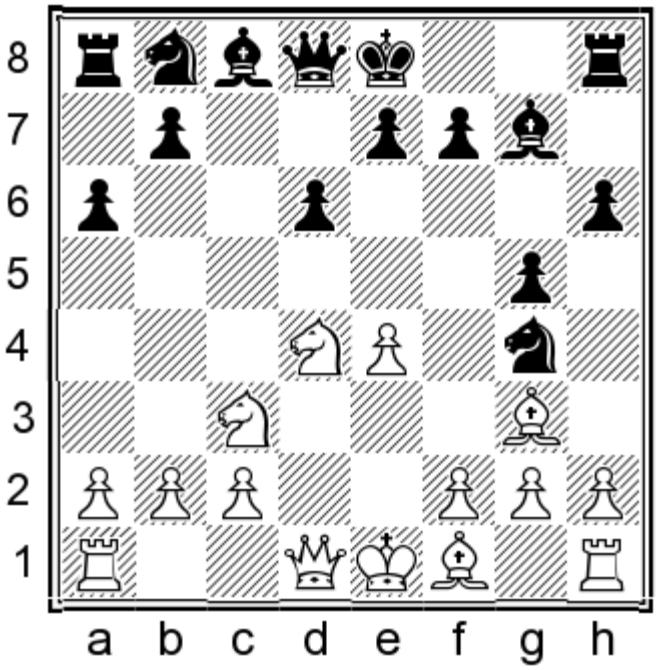
The drawback of the 6...♘g4 line is that sometimes weaker opponents might try to take a draw by repetition, and then Black is forced to play some other line. In this game, McShane is obviously a true fighter and he only repeats twice to get closer to move 40 and avoid mistakes in the time trouble. A clever practical decision!

7...♘f6 8.♗e3 ♘g4 9.♗g5

This is the critical test of the ♘g4 line.

9...h6 10.♗h4 g5 11.♗g3 ♗g7

White has numerous options here. McShane tries to follow a recently popular line.



12.♗e2 h5 13.♗xg4 hxg4

13...♗xg4 14.f3 ♗d7 is the start of another long line.

14.♘d5

White is following the latest fashion. The line has become popular again since 2011, when Shirov defeated Grischuk in Wijk aan Zee.

14...♘c6 15.♘f5 ♗xb2!

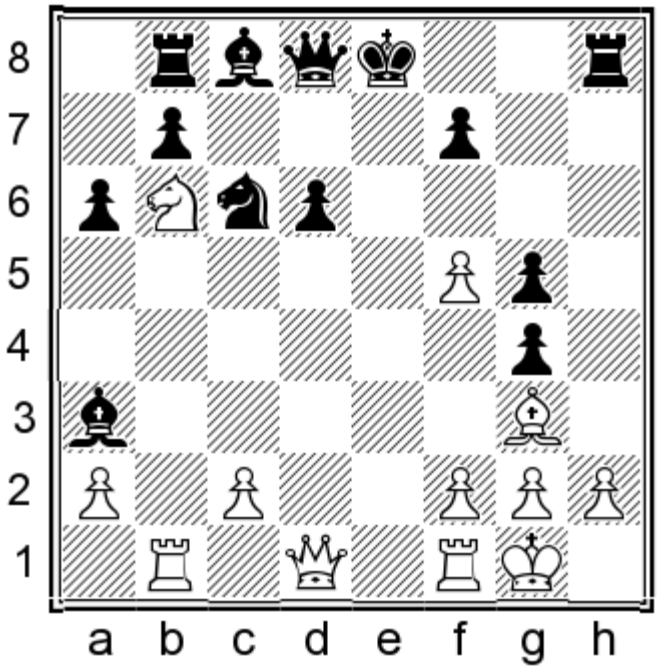
Black included 15...♗xf5 16.exf5 in the afore-mentioned game, but it left the pawn on b7 unprotected compared to our game. 16...♗xb2 17.♖b1 Now after ...♗a3 or ...♗g7, White could simply take on b7. 17...♕a5+ 18.♕d2 and after the exchange of queens, Black loses an exchange with ♘c7. He has some compensation for it, but it was not enough in the game. 18...♗d4 19.♕xa5 ♘xa5 20.c3 ♗c5 21.♘c7+ ♔d7 22.♘xa8 ♖xa8 23.h4! White succeeded in activating his rook on the h-file and converted his advantage later on... 23...gxh3 24.♖xh3 Shirov-Grischuk, Wijk aan Zee.

16.♖b1 ♗a3!

It is very important to switch the diagonal of the bishop. The main idea is to protect the d6 pawn and to be ready to kick out the knights with e6.

17.0-0 ♗c5!

A necessary preparation for e6. 17...e6 directly is a mistake. 18.♘b6! exf5 19.exf5! (Not *19.♘xa8?* because of *19...f4*) 19...♖b8

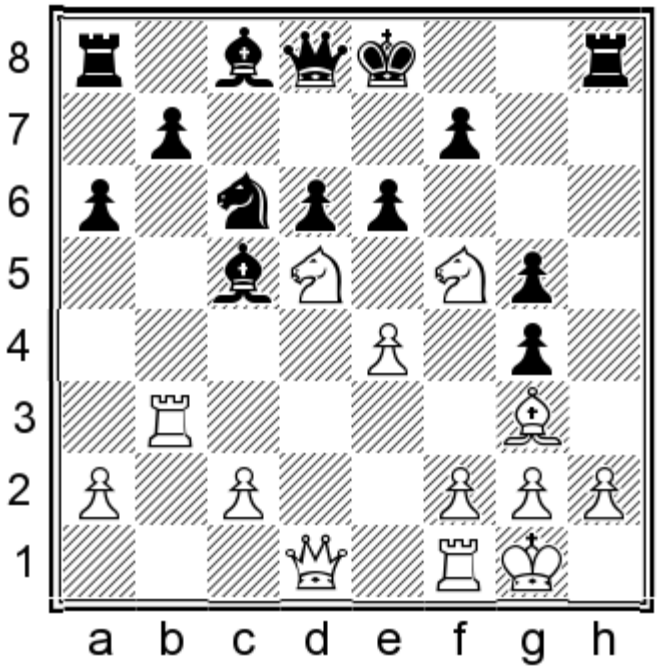


And here comes the beautiful point of the sacrifice. 20.♕e1+!! and ♕c3 next with a double attack on a3 and h8 — this gives White the advantage. 20...♔f8 21.♕c3 Quite an unusual motif!

18.♖b3!

A clever move with many ideas. The rook can be very useful on the 3rd rank later and the hidden point can be seen on the next move.

18...e6!



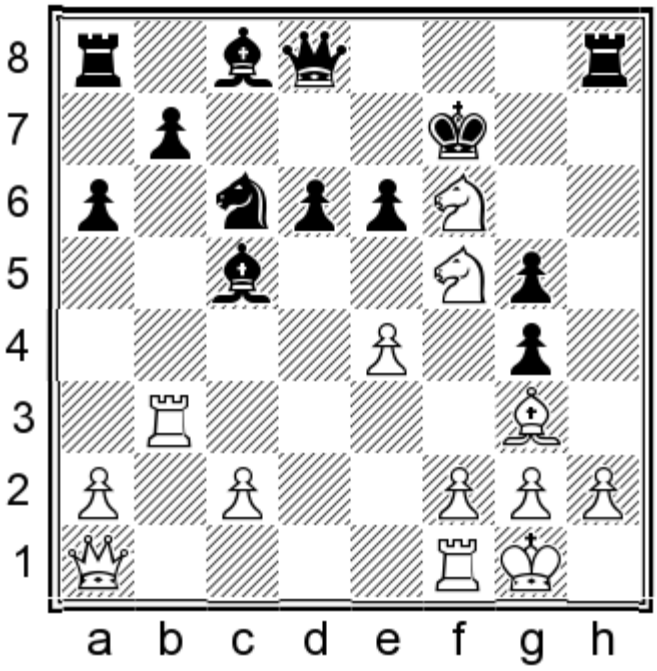
19.♕a1!

A truly spectacular move, forcing a weakness in Black's camp!

19...f6

Black would like to win a piece, but of course, this risky move seriously weakens the king's position and White has many ways to try to exploit this. In my opinion, the correct evaluation of the whole line must be decided after the move 19...e5, which of course gives an outpost for both knights, but on the other hand Black's position is very safe now and the bishop on g3 is pretty awful and can hardly be activated.

20.♘xf6+ ♔f7



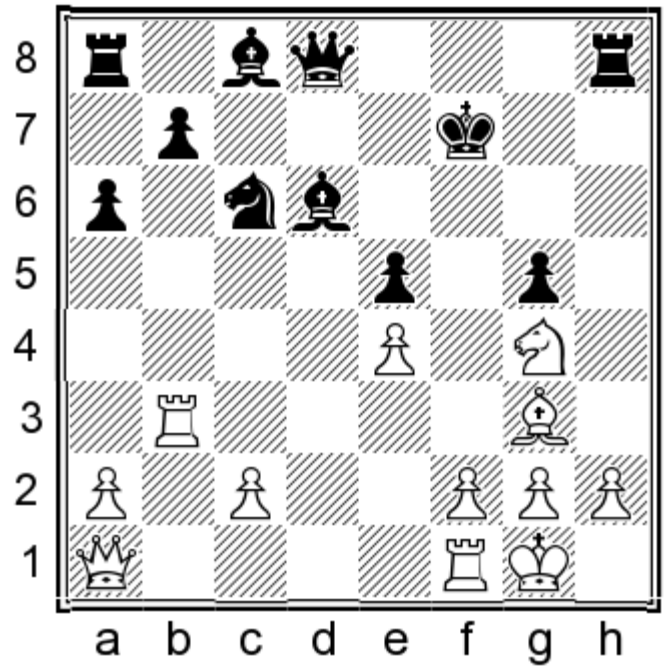
21.♘xd6+!

The best move! White grabs some pawns and continues his attack. The bishop on d6 will be misplaced because of the pinning threats on the d-file. 21.♘e8 is a fantastic move with the multiple threats of ♕g7, ♕xh8 and ♘xd6, but Black can prevent all of them with one move! 21...e5! and the knight is trapped on e8.

21...♗xd6 22.♘xg4!

White has many threats, for example to take on d6, and h8 is hanging; ♖f3 is also very dangerous. The next move is forced!

22...e5!



We have reached the critical position from White's point of view. He has three tempting moves, but only one of them seems to give him the initiative.

23.♕d1

McShane protects the g4 knight and wants to play ♖d3 or ♕f3 followed by ♖d1. 23.♘xe5+ seems to lead nowhere after 23...♘xe5 24.♗xe5 ♗xe5 25.♕xe5 ♖e8 26.♖f3+ ♔g8 and Black's king is more or less safe. 23.♖f3+! is the most dangerous alternative. 23...♔g6 24.♖f6+! ♕xf6 (*24...♔g7* is bad because of *25.♖d1*) 25.♘xf6 ♔xf6 Black seems to be well coordinated with his pieces against the queen, but after 26.f4! White can launch a dangerous attack. 26...gxf4 27.♗xf4 It is much easier to play as White because of his opponent's king position: one bad move can be deadly for Black.

23...♗c5

The machine recommends the cold-blooded 23...♕e7 followed by ...♗e6 and it is hard to prove that White has enough compensation, although the game is still very unclear.

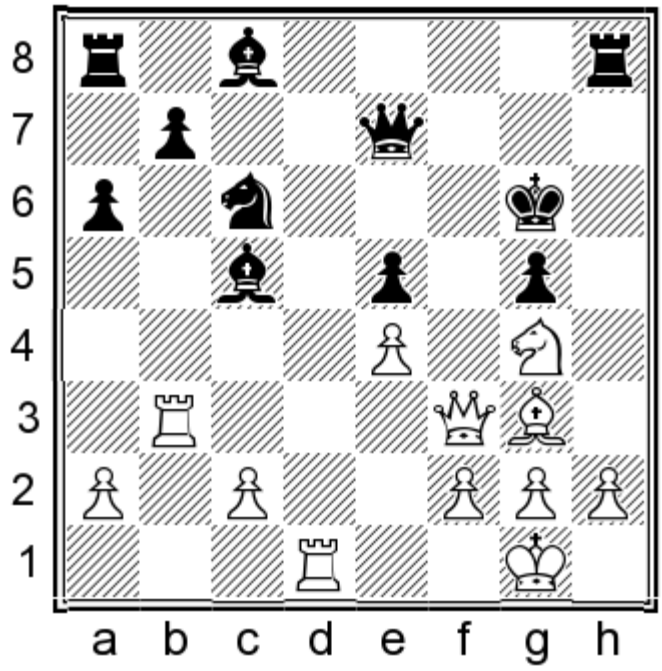
24.♕f3+

White had another option: 24.♖f3+ ♔g7 25.♘xe5 ♕xd1 26.♖xd1 with 3 pawns for the piece, but if Black manages to co-ordinate his pieces, he might take over the initiative 26...♖d8 27.♖xd8 ♘xd8 followed by quick development with ...♗e6 and ...♖c8. The queenside pawns might prove weak.

24...♔g6 25.♖d1!

A good decision — not to be greedy. 25.♘xe5+ ♘xe5 26.♗xe5 ♖f8 is fine for Black as his king is very safe now.

25...♕e7



Black needs only one move to gain a winning advantage with ♖f8, but with such active pieces, White has a move to stay in the game. McShane finds it and plays it.

26.♖xb7!!

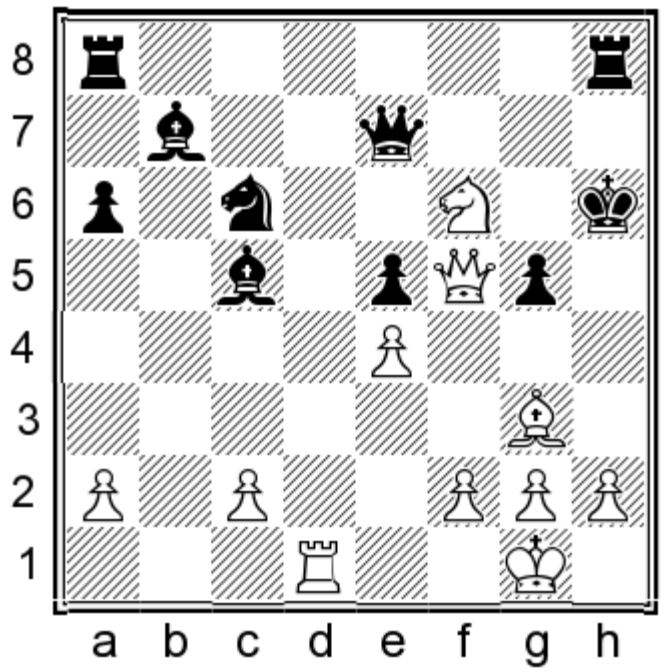
A double-deflection from the f5 and f6 squares.

26...♗xg4

26...♗xb7 leads to a surprising draw as well. 27.♕f5+ ♔h5

(*27...♔g7? 28.♖d7+–*)

28.♘f6+ ♔h6



29.♖d7 seems to finish the game, however, after 29...♘d4!! White is forced to give perpetual check with 30.♘g4+ ♔h5 31.♘f6;

Black loses after 26...♕xb7? 27.♕f6+ ♔h7 28.♕h6+ ♔g8 29.♕g6+ ♔f8

(*29...♕g7 30.♘f6+ ♔f8 31.♕e8#*)

30.♕f6+ ♔g8 31.♗xe5 the bishop cannot be taken because of ♖d8! 31...♖h7 32.♕g6+! ♔f8 33.♘f6! and Black is hopeless against the threatened mates.

27.♕xg4 ♕xb7

And the exposed king allows White to give perpetual check, but he cannot hope for more with ♖d7, because of the check on b1.

28.♕e6+ ♔h5 29.♕h3+ ♔g6 30.♕f5+ ♔h5 31.♕h3+ ♔g6 32.♕f5+

1/2

GAME 12
B. Gelfand (2740)
V. Kramnik (2810)
Zuerich Chess Challenge
Zuerich SUI (4.2)
27.02.2013, [E06]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

A very interesting game in the Catalan was seen between Gelfand and Kramnik. At first, things looked pretty complicated, but after Kramnik sacrificed, White had a chance to keep his extra material. Gelfand did not take advantage of this, giving Kramnik a lot of chances to finish the game in his favor. Finally, after time-trouble, the game ended in a draw.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.g3

With this move, Gelfand chooses the Catalan.

4...♗e7 5.♗g2 0-0 6.0-0 dxc4 7.♕c2 a6

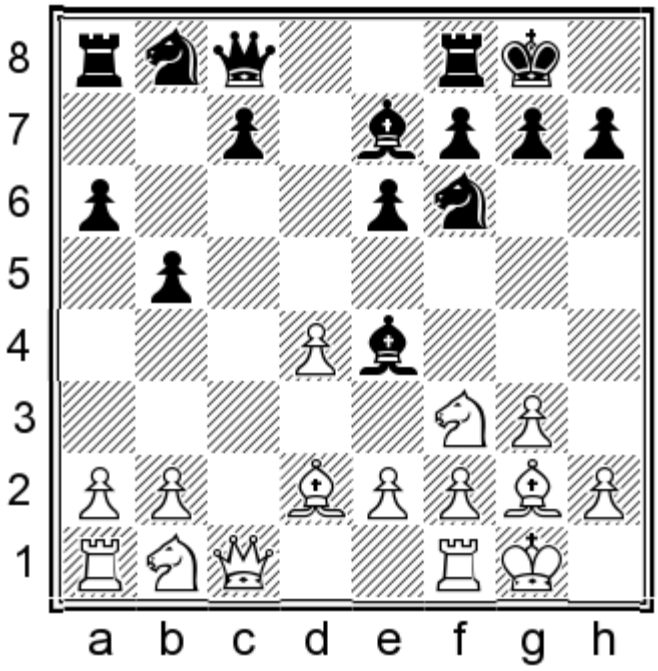
We are in one of the very main lines.

8.♕xc4 b5 9.♕c2 ♗b7 10.♗d2 ♗e4 11.♕c1

Until here, everything is very well known. The main idea: if Black manages to play c5, the position will be equal, so White tries everything he can to stop Black from carrying out the pawn break.

11...♕c8

Quite a rare move, but Kramnik himself had to face this move with the White pieces against Leko in 2007, where he continued with 12.♗g5, which seems to be the main option here.



12.b4!?

It is hard to say if this was Gelfand's preparation, but what could be more logical?! Black wants to play c5 and White is preventing it...

12...♘bd7

The only problem for White now is the c4 square, as the Black knight can get there easily with ♘b6-♘c4.

13.♘c3 ♗c6

Black is preparing for ♕b7 next.

14.a3 ♕b7 15.♕c2

Of course, one of the main ideas for White is to push e4. It does not seem to be an easy task, but by playing ♕c2 followed by ♖fe1, it can work out.

15...h6

15...♘b6 16.♗g5 might give White a slightly better position.

16.♖ac1!?

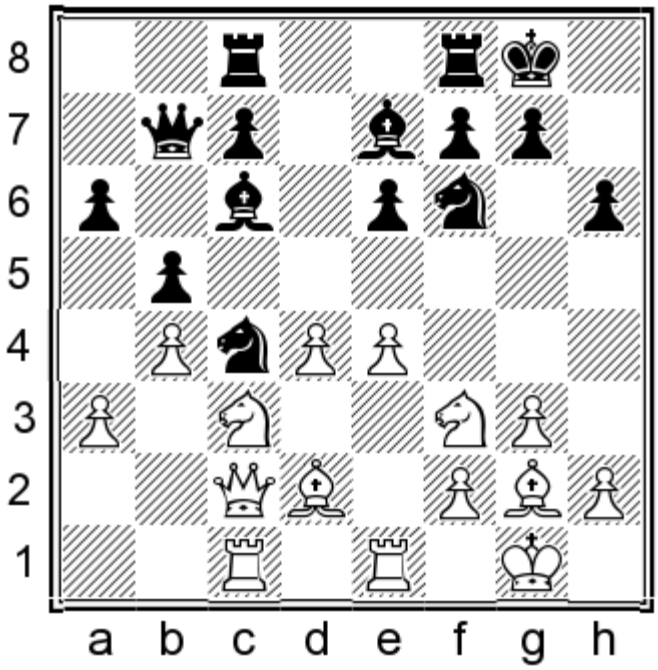
A little bluff by Gelfand.

16...♖ac8?!

There was no need for this move. I think Black could have tried 16...♘b6 17.e4!? I guess this is what Kramnik was afraid of. 17...♗xe4! but everything works out for Black. 18.♘xe4 ♕xe4 looks very dangerous, but tactically everything works for Black. 19.♕xc7 (*19.♕b3 ♕d5*) 19...♘fd5 and Black is perfectly fine.

17.♖fe1 ♘b6 18.e4 ♘c4

The position is very complicated, but somehow it feels that the Black pieces are not entirely well-placed. The Black queen is on b7, which always gives White many dangerous attacking ideas...



19.d5!

Good move! White starts the action.

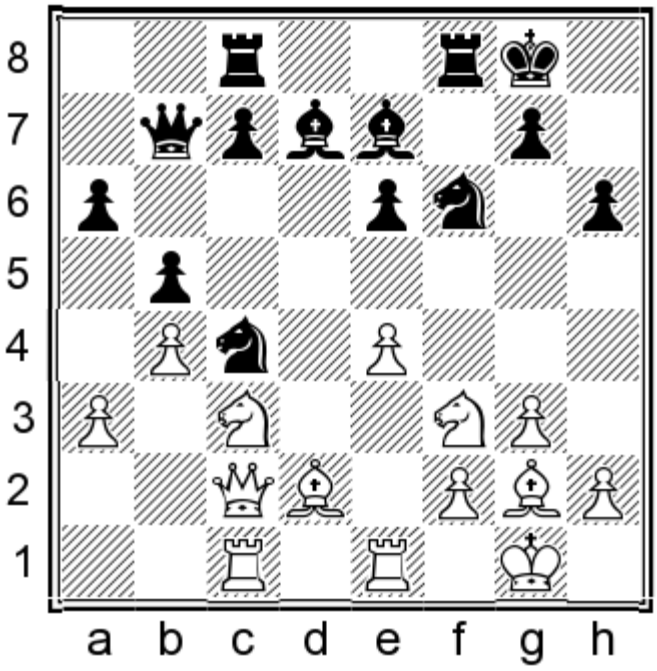
19...♗d7

19...♗e8 is a computer suggestion here, but who could play such an ugly move...?

20.dxe6

White continues with direct play.

20...fxe6



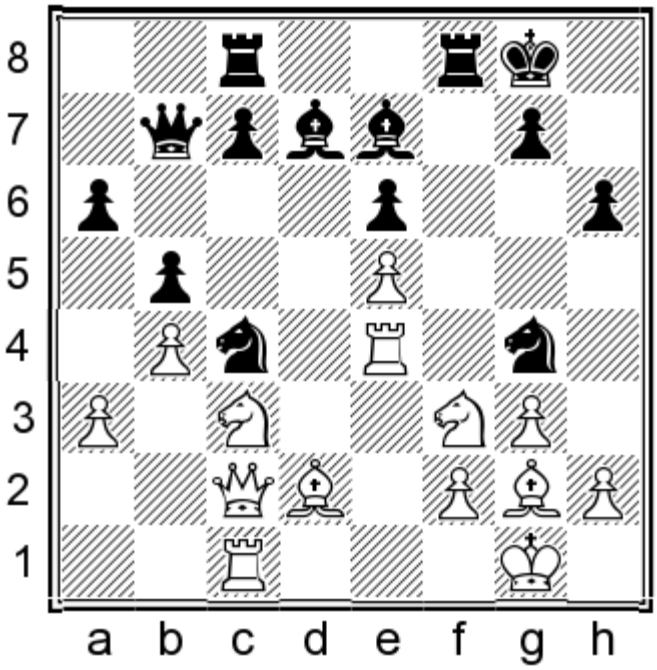
20...♗xe6? 21.e5 probably just loses the game. White will play ♘d4 next.

21.e5

Logical. White had a stronger move: 21.♗xh6! ♘g4 (In case of *21...gxh6 22.e5* followed by ♕g6 is game over.) 22.♗f4 c5 It seems like Black has a lot of counterplay, but after 23.e5! things suddenly turn around. White wants to play ♕g6 next. Also, the idea ♘e4-♘g5 can be deadly. White should be better here.

21...♘g4 22.♖e4

The Black knight is trapped, but...(!!!)



22...♘xf2!

a very strong move, even though Black had practically no choices already.

23.♔xf2 ♘xd2 24.♕xd2 c5

White is a clear piece up, but suddenly a lot of White's pieces are hanging. Black's bishop pair is becoming very strong.

25.♔g1

It is very logical to take the king away from the f-file. 25.♖f4!? would have been a good way to continue the game for White. To exchange a rook cannot be wrong when you are a piece up.

25...cxb4

Black opens the c-file.

26.axb4 ♗c6 27.♖ce1 a5

Very original play by Kramnik, but was it necessary?! Why not just the simple 27...♖fd8 forcing the White Queen to leave the d2 square, while at the same time, protecting the b4 pawn? 28.♕e2 ♗xe4 29.♘xe4 ♗xb4 30.♖f1 The position is still very tricky. White will try to go for a mating attack by playing ♘h4 next, but I think Black's chances should be at least equal here. The a- and b-pawns could play a deadly role in any endgame.

28.♘d4 ♕a7?

A blunder. Black already had no choice here... 28...♗xe4 29.♘xe4 ♕a7 and White should be doing better, but the position is still super-complicated.

29.♘cxb5?

What a shocking move... Gelfand gives up his knight for just a pawn — why do that?! Firstly, 29.♖4e3! ♗xg2 and only now 30.♘cxb5! would have kept the game clearly in White's favor. I do not see a way for Black to continue here... White remains a full piece up.

29...♗xb5 30.♔h1 ♗c4

With the bishop pair in a very open position, Black is clearly much better here. White needs to be very careful not to lose any material immediately.

31.bxa5 ♖fd8

All the White pieces start to hang...

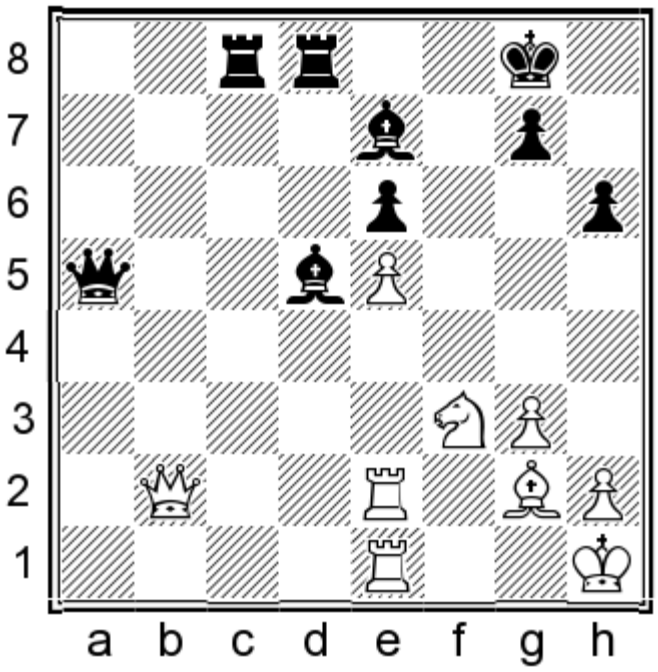
32.♕b2 ♕xa5 33.♘f3

Can White survive here?

33...♗d5

Very logical.

34.♖4e2



34...♗b4!

pushing the White rook from e1 to g1.

35.♖g1 ♗c3 36.♕b1

All the Black pieces are just perfectly placed, but to find a killer blow is not at all easy.

36...♗c4?!

This seems to be a move in the wrong direction. 36...♕a6; 36...♖f8; 36...♖c4 were all very nice for Black. It might seem that the position should be close to a draw, and that Black has nothing more, but this is an extremely false impression. Black's pieces are fully dominating the board and, sooner or later, Black will find a way to break through the defensive lines.

37.♖e3 ♗b4?

and this is already a serious mistake. Clearly, transporting the bishop from c3 to f8 cannot be the right way of playing.

38.♖e4 ♗f8 39.♖f4 ♗d3 40.♕b3 ♕d5

Time-trouble is over and we can see that White has improved his position dramatically during the last few moves. The exchange of queens is worth a lot.

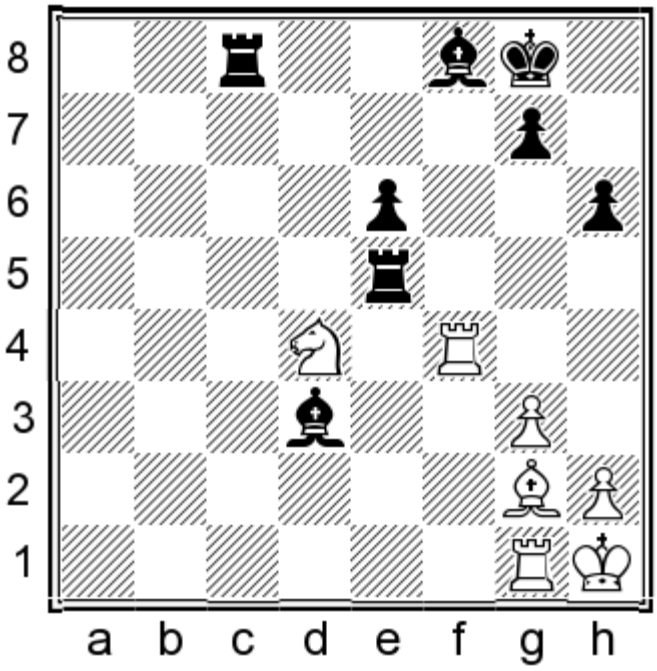
41.♕xd5 ♖xd5

Gelfand finds a nice tactical way to force a draw.

42.♘d4!

and, of course, the exchange of the e-pawns gives White a draw.

42...♖xe5



43.♘xe6 ♗e7 44.♖d4!

Another precise move so as “not to suffer”.

44...♗f5 45.♘f4

The position is a draw.

45...♗c5 46.♖d5

A lot of chances were missed by both sides, but all-in-all it was a very exciting game!

1/2

GAME 13
P. Svidler (2747)
A. Grischuk (2764)
FIDE Candidates London ENG (9.2)
25.03.2013, [E81]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

After winning against Ivanchuk the previous day, Grischuk was clearly going for another victory, pushing the game towards a completely messy position. At first, it seemed like White should be doing better, but after some crazy complications the game finally ended in a draw. A really interesting game.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6

The King’s Indian, probably the most fighting opening for Black at the current time.

3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3

Same as in his game against Radjabov, Svidler chooses the system with 5.f3.

5...0-0 6.♗e3 c5 7.♘ge2 ♘c6

The situation is quite clear. White’s main idea is to keep his center alive and strong, and Black will look to start quick play against it, which is usually supported by the very strong bishop on g7.

8.d5 ♘e5 9.♘g3 h5

h5 is a very typical move against the knight on g3.

10.♗e2

White develops a piece, preparing the f1-square for the knight at the same time. Of course, moves like 10.h4? are very bad. Then White will never be able to play f4 because of the weak g4 square, and after Black’s e6 move the h4 pawn might be weakened.

10...h4

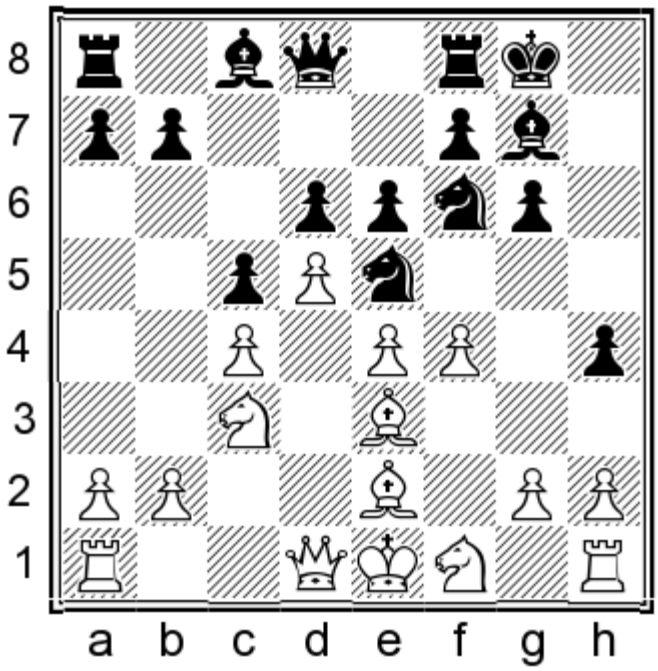
Before starting action in the center, Black shunts the White knight to a passive position.

11.♘f1 e6

Until this point, both players were moving fast...

12.f4

What could be more logical than this move?! It seems like ♘ed7 is the only move...



12...♘xc4!

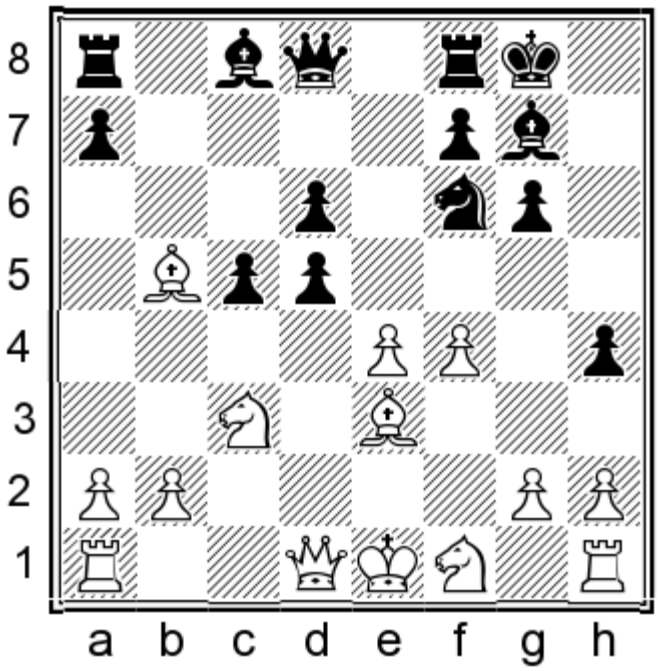
but a super-interesting idea by Grischuk. Black is giving up a full piece, but opening White's position to the maximum! On 12...♘ed7? White is simply winning a pawn. 13.dxe6 fxe6 14.♕xd6+–

13.♗xc4 b5!

This is the key idea! Black is giving another pawn away and opening one more extra file to activate his pieces.

14.♗xb5 exd5

The starting position of the real battle! White has a lot of different choices:



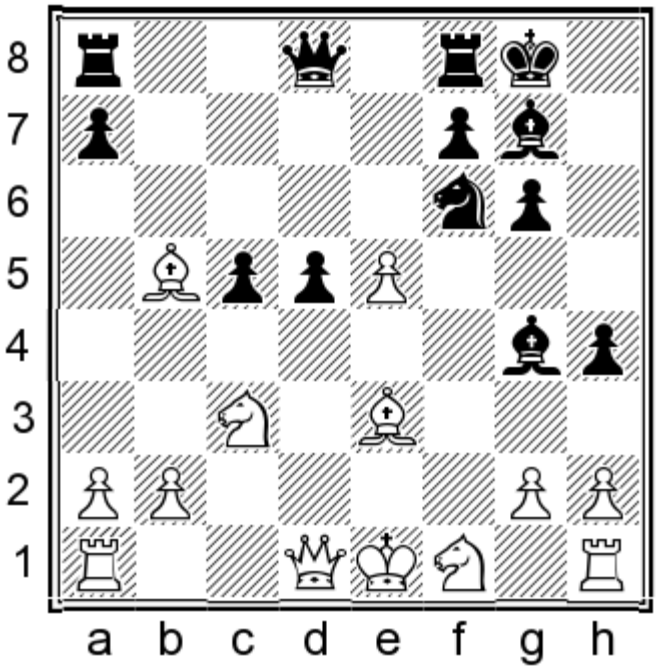
15.e5!

The most logical move and probably a very good one as well. It also looks very logical to play 15.exd5 but then Black can continue with 15...♖b8! The position is very strange: White is a full piece up, but maybe Black is doing perfectly fine here. White's king is on e1, Black has a target on b2, the e-file is open and moves like h3 or ♘g4 could be quite unpleasant for White. Even with the support of a strong computer, it is very difficult to say who is doing better here.

15...dxe5 16.fxe5

and once again Black has a lot of choices! Maybe 16...d4!? was also an alternative way to continue.

16...♗g4



17.exf6!

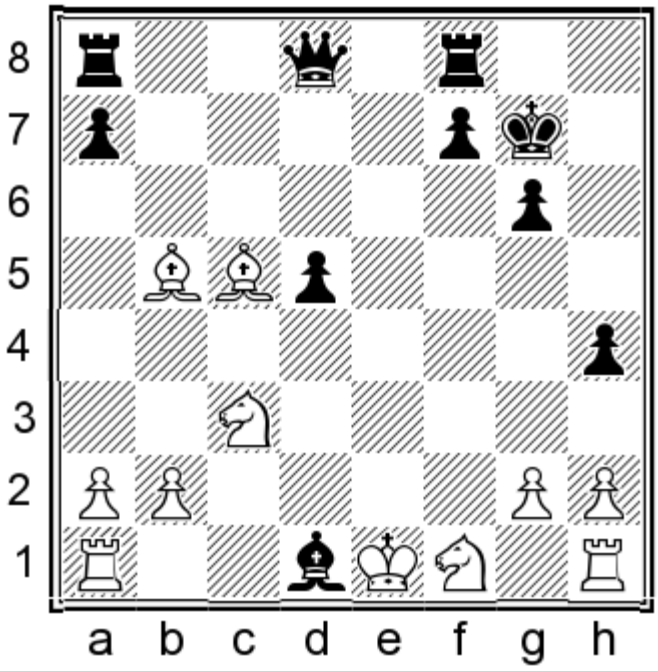
Svidler makes a good decision again. By simplifying the position, White reaches quite a steady advantage. One of the top computer moves is 17.♕d3 and the craziness would continue...

17...♗xd1 18.fxg7

White has 4 pieces for the queen, but Black is going to recapture one of them...

18...♔xg7 19.♗xc5!

A great move by White! It is very important to secure the dark squares, which will give White big attacking chances in the future.



19...h3!

Grischuk is not sleeping. It is clear that if White manages to centralize, his pieces are going to be much stronger than the queen and probably the game will end with a mating attack on the Black king.

20.♖xd1 hxg2

and Black wins one piece back.

21.♖g1 gxf1=♕+ 22.♔xf1

Let's take a fresh look at the position. White was a full piece ahead, and suddenly it is Black who has a queen and a pawn for 3 White minor pieces — this gives Black a clear material advantage. On the other hand, White's pieces are very strong and the bishop pair is worth at least an extra exchange. Also, the Black king might come under a dangerous attack very quickly. White's rook on g1 is very well placed, and the rook from d1 might immediately join the attack.

22...♕h4

Of course, Black does not care about saving the rook from f8. White's dark-squared bishop is worth more than an exchange.

23.♖g2

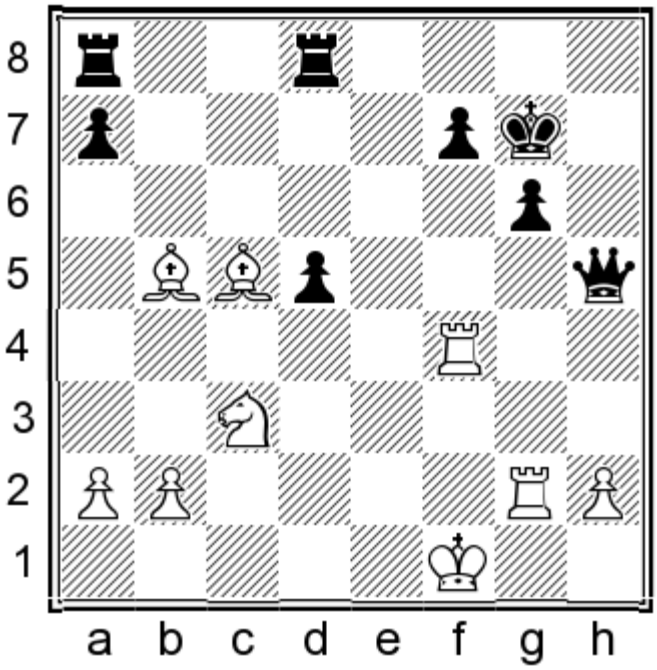
A strong, safe move by White. Now Black has no more nasty checks...

23...♖fd8 24.♖d4

a very logical move, but I am not sure whether White has done his best. I think that after 24.♗d4, followed by ♖d3 or ♖dd2, White could have launched a very dangerous attack on the Black king.

24...♕h5 25.♖f4

It seems as though White is better. ♗d4 is a deadly threat, and ♗e7 next could also be quite unpleasant. The rooks on g2 and f4 are perfectly placed and it seems like Black has no counterplay.



25...d4!!

Fantastic play by Black! Grischuk is investing a pawn plus an exchange to get White's dark-squared bishop. A very deep understanding of the game.

26.♗xd4+ ♖xd4 27.♖xd4 ♖b8

and the position remains completely unclear. One thing that we can probably say is that White does not risk losing the game, but whether he can win is a difficult question. Many checks and the open king on f2 afford Black a lot of tricks!

28.a4?!

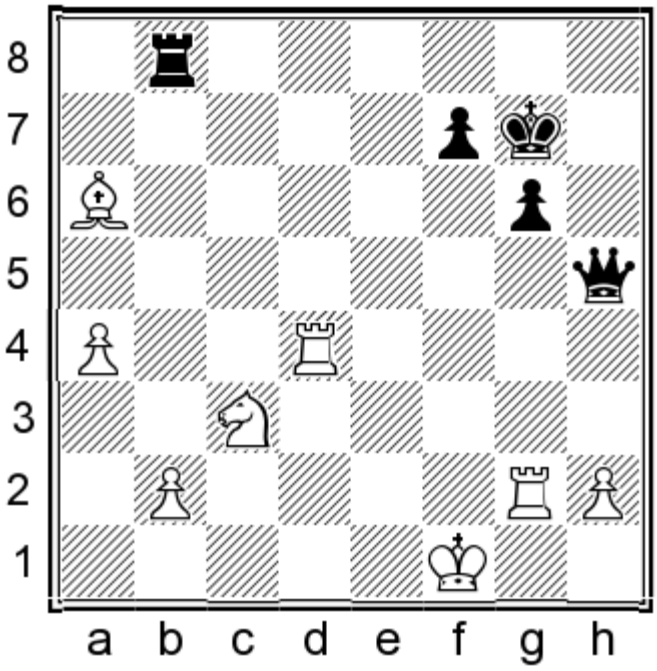
Probably the first imprecise move by White. 28.♖d5! would have been the right choice, and White is better.

28...a6!

Until here, we have seen a very high level game! Grischuk continues playing the best moves! Black cannot let the White pieces regroup.

29.♗xa6?

In the upcoming time-trouble, White blunders. 29.♗e2 and the position would remains pretty equal.



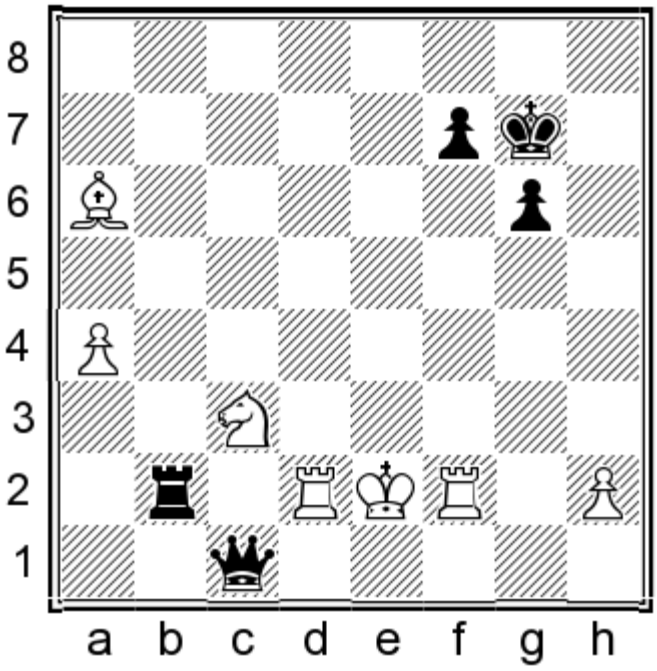
29...♕f3+?

A tempting move, since Black is going to take the pawn on b2 with check, but it is a blunder! 29...♕e5! would have almost won the game! The d4 rook is hanging and ♕f6 check is going to win the bishop on a6. White has no decent defense against this.

30.♖f2 ♕h1+ 31.♔e2 ♖xb2+ 32.♖d2

White manages to defend all his pieces!

32...♕c1



33.♔d3!

The only move, but a strong one anyway!

33...♖b6

Of course. Black needs to keep a rook on the board in order to use the unfortunate position of the White king.

34.♗c4 ♖d6+ 35.♗d5 ♖d7 36.♖f4

White has managed to defend everything and it is clear that the position should be close to winning. The a-pawn is the key to success.

36...f5!

Grischuk is searching for his only chance — to create some kind of counterplay, and he has no other pieces left, only the f7 pawn...

37.♖d4 ♔h6 38.h4?

During time-trouble, White misses Black's counterplay. The careful 38.♖d1 seems to give White very good winning chances.

38...♖c7!

A great move.

39.♗c4

A logical way to defend the knight on c3.

39...♕f1+!

and now we see why 38.♖d1 would have been better...

40.♖e2 f4

Black's f-pawn is unstoppable!

41.♔c2 f3

The game could have continued with: 42.♖ee4 ♖xc4 43.♖xc4 f2 44.♖f4 ♕xc4 45.♖xc4 f1=♕ 46.♔b3 and the position is simply a draw. What a great fighting game! It has been a while since I have seen such craziness on the board!

1/2

GAME 14
A. Morozevich (2760)
Hi Nakamura (2775)
Makedonia Palace GP Thessaloniki GRE (4)
25.05.2013, [B80]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We will look at a really crazy game now with a completely unclear position and a lot of funny mating ideas. I can never understand why these games usually end in a draw. In our case, once again, the final result is a friendly handshake.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e6

Black usually does not choose this move order, trying to avoid 6.g4, but Nakamura likes to provoke his opponents a bit, even by taking “too many” risks.

6.♗e3 a6

Now we are back in the main lines of the Schveningen, just with a different move order.

7.f3 b5 8.♕d2 ♘bd7

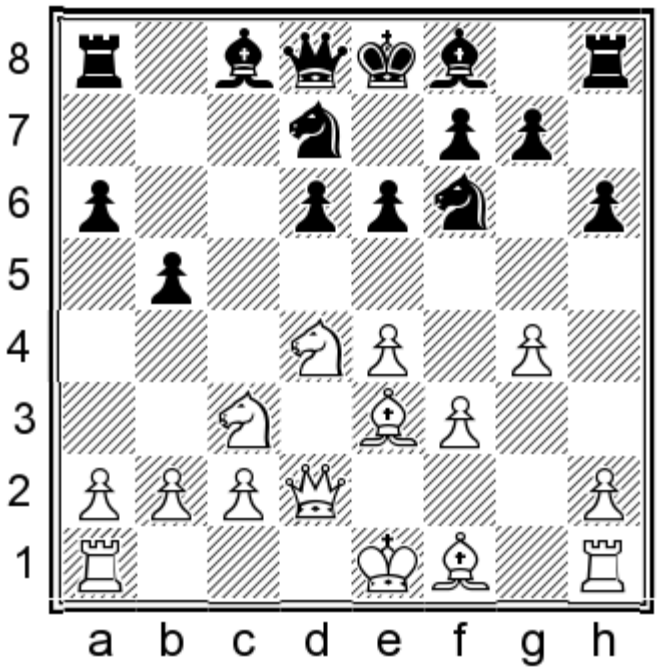
This super-sharp line was very popular around five years ago, but then, somehow, other moves came into fashion.

9.g4

9.a4 is the other main move in the position.

9...h6

White just wants to play g5 on the next move, so h6 is a very logical solution. Another idea for Black is to play ♘b6 or ♘e6, freeing the d7-square, but it is a very different line.



10.a3

This is clearly not the main move, but a very logical one. White is avoiding Black’s b4 move, and just wants to castle long with the idea h4-♗h3 and g5. Black will have to act quickly in the center in order not to be crushed on the kingside.

10...♗b7 11.0-0-0

It is easy to see that the position is becoming very sharp. Black's main idea should be to play ...d5 as fast as possible.

11...♖c8

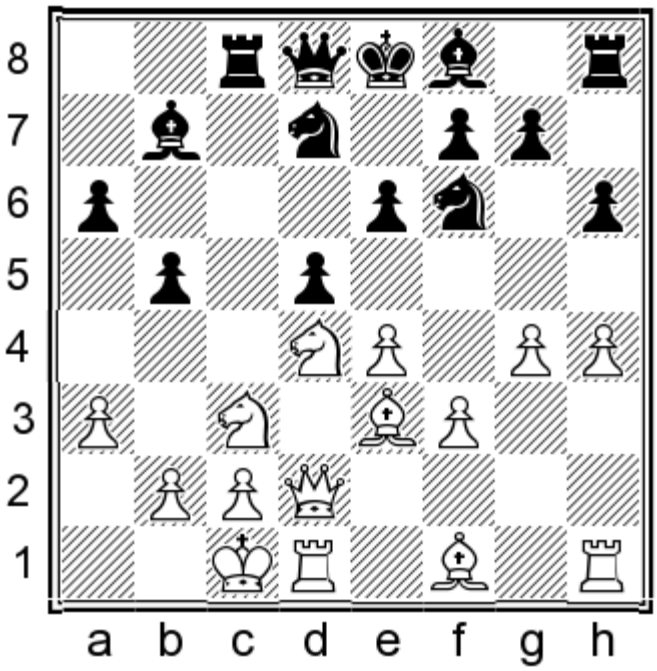
A preparatory move before the d5 push. In a few top-level GM games we have seen 11...d5 12.exd5 ♘xd5 13.♘xd5 ♗xd5 but it seems that after 14.♗e2 with the idea ♘f5, White might be a bit better.

12.h4

White is following the main idea — to play g5.

12...d5

The d5 move is already almost forced.



13.♖g1!?

The beginning of the craziness! 13.exd5 ♘xd5 14.♘xd5 ♗xd5 and maybe Black's ♖c8 is more useful than White's h4.

13...dxe4

Black has no choice again.

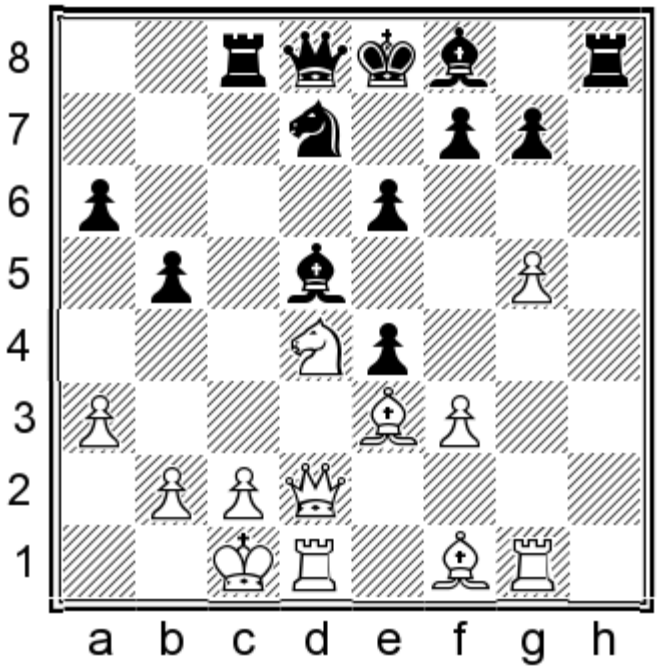
14.g5 hxg5

Before going with the knight to d5, it is very logical for Black to open the h-file.

15.hxg5 ♘d5 16.♘xd5

White continues the "move-by-move" play. Against the logical 16.♘xe4 g6 Black consolidates his position.

16...♗xd5



17.g6!

A hugely important move that we can witness in many similar positions. By playing g6, White is completely decimating Black's pawn structure, which usually gives good play against the king.

17...f5 18.fxe4

Opening the f-file for extra play.

18...fxe4

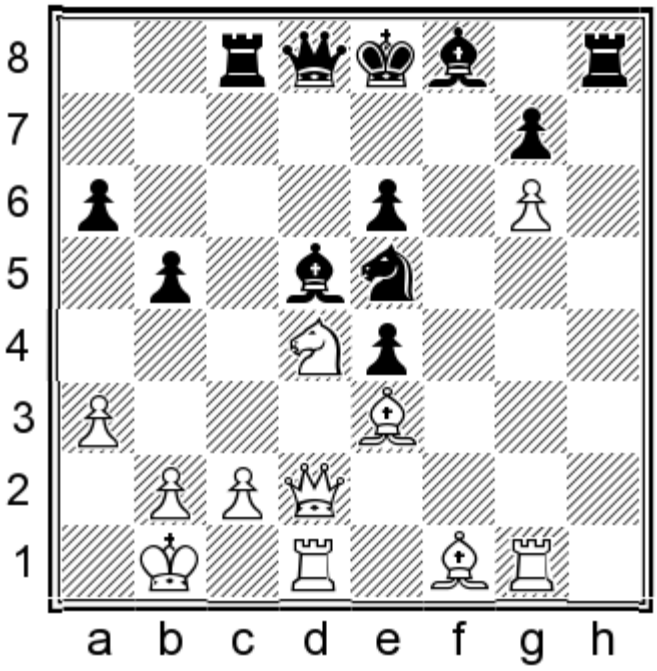
I think we are now at one of the critical positions. At first sight, it seems like White should have great play for just a pawn, but on the other hand, Black's position is very solid and hard to crack.

19.♔b1

A typical move. Before starting the action, it is important to place the king in a safe position. The funny move 19.a4!? may have been a possibility here. White needs the b5 square a lot and Black does not have the usual ♕a5 move now.

19...♘e5

Very logical. The black knight is going to f3.



20.♘xb5!?

Wow, what a move! White does not care about the material and simply tries to open Black's king position to the maximum.

20...♘f3!

A good reply by Black. It would have been reckless to take on b5. 20...axb5?! 21.♗xb5+ ♗c6 (Of course not *21...♘c6 22.c4!* and White is winning.) 22.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 and now the very important move 23.♕g2! with the idea of ♕xe4 next. It seems to me that White has great play here.

21.♕f2

Preventing ♘xg1 for a second, because of ♕f7 mate.

21...♕f6

with a double threat. Both axb5 and ♘xg1 are possible now.

22.♕g3!?

Another very interesting move. The simple 22.♘d4 ♘xg1 23.♕xg1 would have led to very unclear play as well. White is an exchange down, but the a6 pawn is hanging, and the Black king is still in the center.

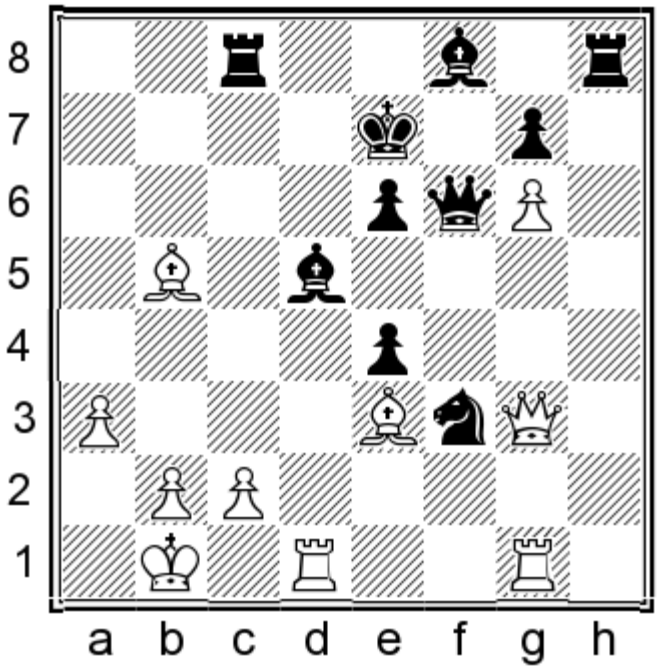
22...axb5

White's idea, of course, is to play 22...♘xg1 23.♘c7+ when the black king is forced to take a walk.

23.♗xb5+ ♔e7

Black is a full piece up, but the position of his king on e7 is clearly a disaster. On the other hand, the f3-knight is a beast and Black wants to play ♕f5-♔f6 next to free the bishop from f8. White needs to continue acting very

energetically.



24.c4!?

White continues playing very creatively! This seems to be a blunder at first, but White has an ace up his sleeve.

24...♖h2

Attacking the b2 square. How should White protect it?

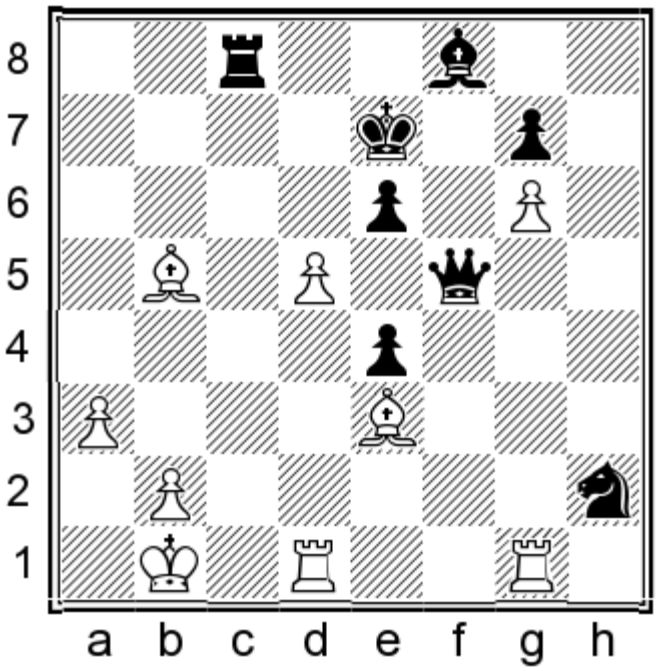
25.♕xh2!

The position remains super-complicated, but a great and creative move deserves a “!” mark.

25...♘xh2 26.cxd5

This is the key move! Of course not 26.♗g5? when White is winning back the queen, but Black still has a clear advantage. 26...♕xg5 27.♖xg5 ♗xc4 Black still has two pieces for the rook and a clearly better position.

26...♕f5!

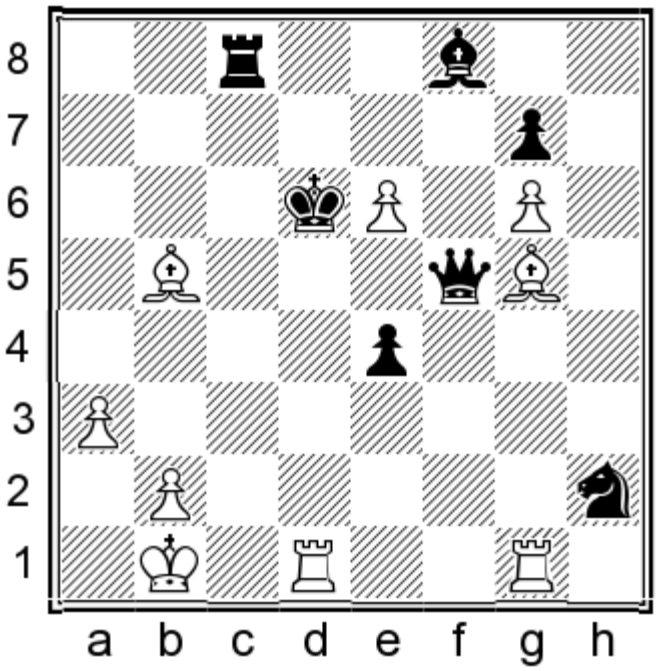


Perfect defense by Black! Only this square is saving Black from immediate disaster. White wanted, of course, to play ♗d6, and against Black's ...♔d8, ♗b6 with mate.

27.♗g5+

The black king starts his journey.

27...♔d6 28.dxe6+



28...♔e5

We are facing a really insane position. Black has a huge material advantage, but the king on e5 is under attack from all

sides. And again Black has a special joker — the free pawn on e4. It is very hard to say who is doing better here.

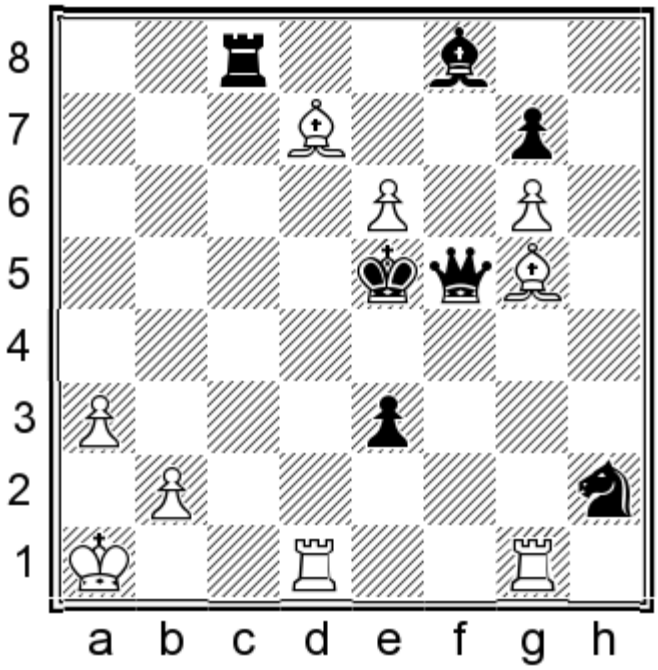
29.♗d7?!

It seems like this logical move leads to a forced draw. First 29.e7! ♗xe7 and only now 30.♗d7! would have left Black in big trouble! Still, the position is very complicated, but it seems like it should be in White's favor.

29...e3+!

The beginning of Black's counterattack.

30.♔a1



30...♗xa3!

And this is the main point! Any passive move would lead to White's victory, but ♗xa3 does not give him any time for e7, and suddenly the white king is the insecure monarch.

31.♗xc8 ♕c2

By giving away a rook and a bishop in the last two moves, Black secures the draw.

32.bxa3

Nothing else is possible...

32...♕c3+ 33.♔a2 ♕xc8

Black does not give perpetual check immediately. Well, this does not signify a big change to the game, but it does show that Nakamura really wanted to fight.

34.e7

The easiest way to force Black to repeat moves.

34...♕c2+ 35.♔a1 ♕c3+ 36.♔a2 ♕c2+ 37.♔a1 ♕c3+ 38.♔a2 ♕c2+

What a fantastic fighting game on a very high level!

1/2

GAME 15
A. Grischuk (2779)
L. Dominguez Perez (2723)
Makedonia Palace GP Thessaloniki GRE (10.4)
02.06.2013, [D70]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We will now see another very exciting game. After a long theoretical battle, it first seemed as though White should be better, but then Black took over and the game finally ended in a draw.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3

This move is now very popular, as the idea is to avoid the main Gruenfeld positions where at the moment nobody is able to show a clear way to get an advantage.

3...d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘b6 6.♘c3

We are entering a very sharp and complicated line. To play this kind of position without great analyses is simply impossible, as one would risk quickly getting into trouble.

6...♗g7 7.♗e3 0-0 8.♕d2

The main ideas here are simple; White is trying to quickly castle queenside and start the attack on Black's king by playing h4-h5 and ♗h6, while Black is trying to create some counterplay against White's center.

8...e5

One of the most principled continuations here. Of course it is all still theory.

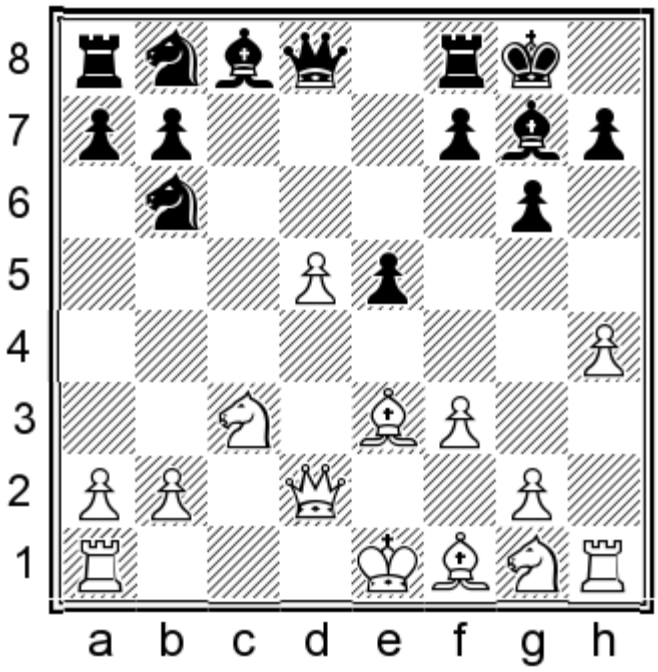
9.d5 c6

As promised, Black begins an immediate attack on the centre...

10.h4

...and White on the kingside.

10...cxd5 11.exd5



11...♘8d7

The black knight is going from b8 to f6, where it will protect the king and attack d5.

12.h5 ♘f6 13.hxg6 fxg6!

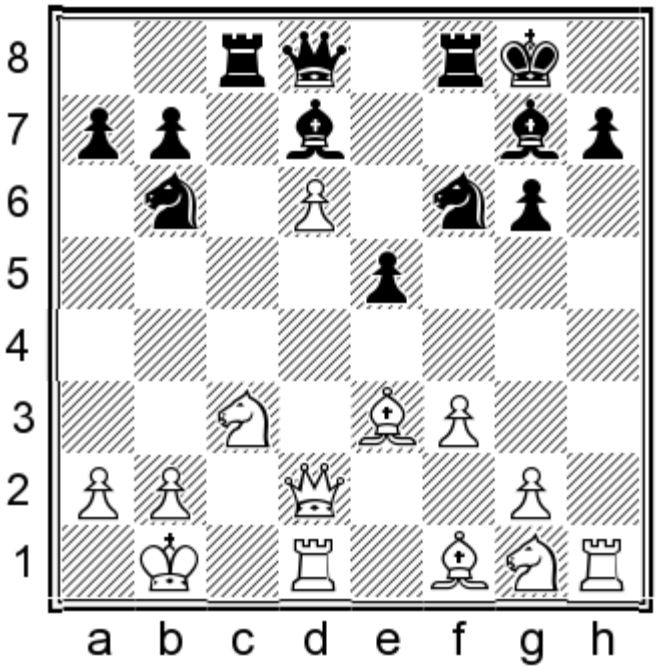
This move is, of course, killing his own pawn structure, but the rook on f8 immediately enters into the game. It is clear that in the current position dynamics are much more important than positional factors.

14.0-0-0 ♗d7

Black is taking his time to bring the last piece into the game, the rook from a8.

15.d6 ♖c8 16.♔b1

As we can see, the position is highly unbalanced. White has a lot of positional advantages, such as the d6 pawn, but Black is clearly better developed and should search for his chances in “fast” play.



16...e4!?

Exactly like this! I guess both players still knew this position very well, but this doesn't matter to us. What is important here is to know how to handle such positions. Black doesn't wait any longer and tries to open White's position to the maximum! A very typical approach in cases of 'development advantage'!

17.fxe4

White doesn't have a choice, he has to take.

17...♘g4

Of course Black wants to play ...♘xe3 and at the same time ...♗xc3 is dangerous, which forces White to act quickly.

18.♗g5

Again White had nothing better.

18...♕e8

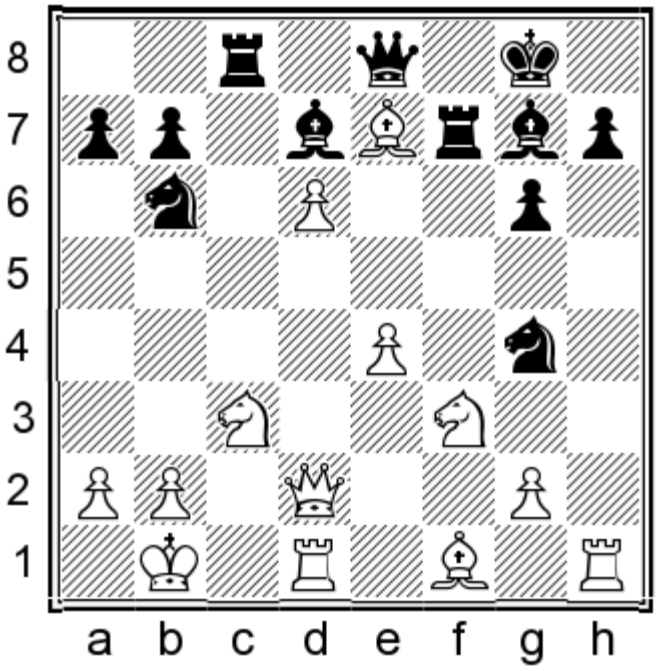
White uses the mini-tempo won with ♗g5 to develop a piece.

19.♘f3 ♖f7!?

Black is preparing a tricky move! The straightforward 19...♗xc3 20.bxc3 ♘a4 wouldn't lead to anything because of 21.♖c1 ♕xe4+ 22.♔a1 and White is probably doing better here. It is also too early for 19...♖xc3 20.bxc3 ♘a4 because of 21.♗c4+ and Black is not in time.

20.♗e7

A very logical move by White with the idea of playing ♘g5 next. What to do now for Black?!



20...♖xc3!

A great sacrifice. At first sight it just looks bad for Black, but if we look deeper, things are getting really complicated.

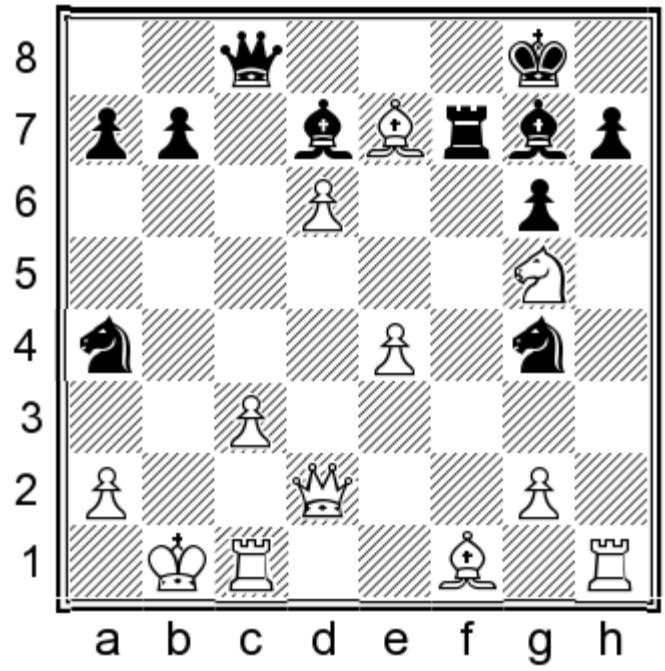
21.bxc3 ♕c8

This is Black's idea. The Queen joins the attack and the monster bishop on g7 is a very dangerous piece, while White's bishop on e7 is in a more-or-less passive position.

22.♖c1 ♘a4

I guess this is one of the most critical moments of this game. White has a huge amount of options.

23.♘g5



White continues forcing things. After 23.c4 then 23...♕c5, followed by ♕b6, is great for Black. After the rather passive 23.♗e2 ♕c5 is strong as well. A bit of a strange position, but it really seems as if Black has enough play for being an exchange and a pawn down.

23...♕c5!

Great play by Black! Another exchange is being sacrificed in order to attack the White king.

24.♘xf7

White has to take...

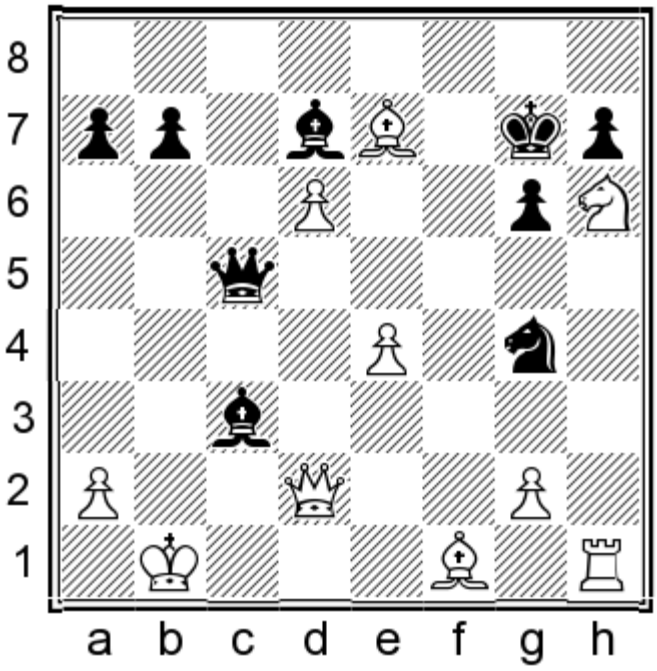
24...♘xc3+ 25.♖xc3 ♗xc3

What to do now for White?! The Queen and the knight on f7 are hanging.

26.♘h6+

It can’t be wrong to save the knight.

26...♔g7



27.♕d5

This move leads to a perpetual check, but White probably already had nothing better. 27.♕e2? is of course losing after 27...♕b4+ 28.♔c1 ♕a3+ 29.♔d1 ♗a4+;

27.♕c2 This move leads to the exact same draw as in the game: 27...♕b4+ 28.♕b3 ♕xe4+.

27...♕b4+ 28.♕b3 ♕xe4+

and White cannot escape from the checks...

29.♕c2 ♕e1+ 30.♕c1 ♕e4+ 31.♕c2 ♕e1+ 32.♕c1 ♕e4+ 33.♕c2

What a superb fighting game! I would be curious to know whether or not Dominguez knew everything until the end?!

1/2

GAME 16
F. Caruana (2774)
V. Kramnik (2803)
8th Tal Memorial Moscow RUS (6.2)
19.06.2013, [C67]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

In recent years chess has changed a lot and even endgames are now very well analyzed by the top players. In the current game, it is hard to say when both players left their preparation- maybe never! It seems to be a “start-to-end draw” but anyhow, it is a very beautiful game.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6

One of Kramnik’s favorite openings, the Berlin.

4.0-0

4.d3 is the way to avoid the main endgame, which is very popular nowadays.

4...♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8

Caruana has entered the main line.

9.h3

9.♘c3 is possible too.

9...♗d7

9...♔e8 is the other main move here and after 10.♘c3 h5, this line has proven to be rock-solid for Black. The text move is far trickier for both sides. Black’s idea is to escape to b7 with his king and to play with the bishop pair. In the meantime, White is trying to make use of his development by creating more direct threats.

10.♖d1

It is now the last chance for Black to decide where to move his king. White wants to play e6 followed by ♘e5.

10...♔c8 11.g4

The beginning of a very forced line.

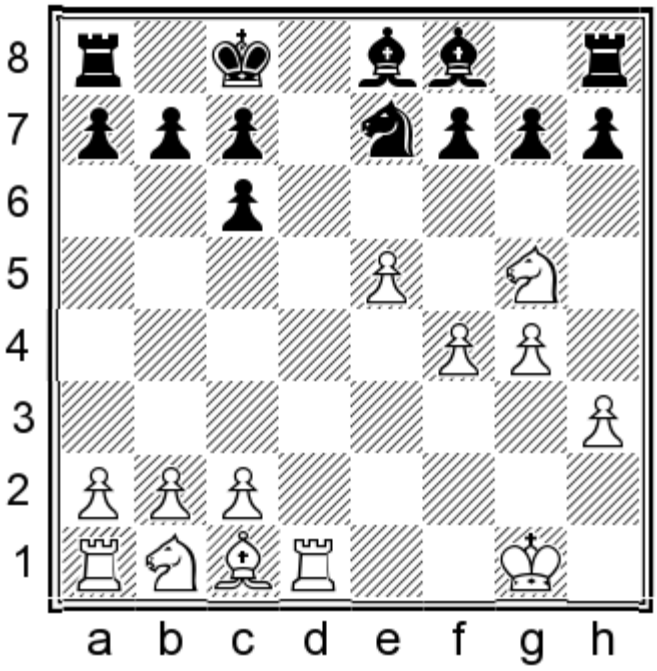
11...♘e7

Black is threatening to play h5 next.

12.♘g5 ♗e8

12...♗e6? would of course just be a big mistake. In the worst case White could play ♘xe6, and this exchange is always in his favor.

13.f4



The position is becoming very dynamic. If White could play ♔g2-♔g3 next and stabilize his position, Black would be in big trouble — but it is Black's turn and, as we know, the bishop pair can be activated very quickly.

13...h5!

Of course Kramnik knew this move, but it is still nice to see. Black opens the h-file, which can be very useful for the active phase of the game.

14.f5

Once again White is going for a very forceing continuation. 14.♔g2 appears to be very solid, but the position is also pretty unclear here. 14...hxg4 (*14...b6* is another possible move, but I think that White is a little bit better after *15.♔g3*.) 15.hxg4 f6 attempting a forced refutation. The f6 push is another very typical idea. 16.♘e6 ♗d7 17.♘xf8 ♖xf8 18.f5 avoiding Black's ...f5 push, which is a dangerous positional threat. 18...fxe5 and the game should probably end in a draw.

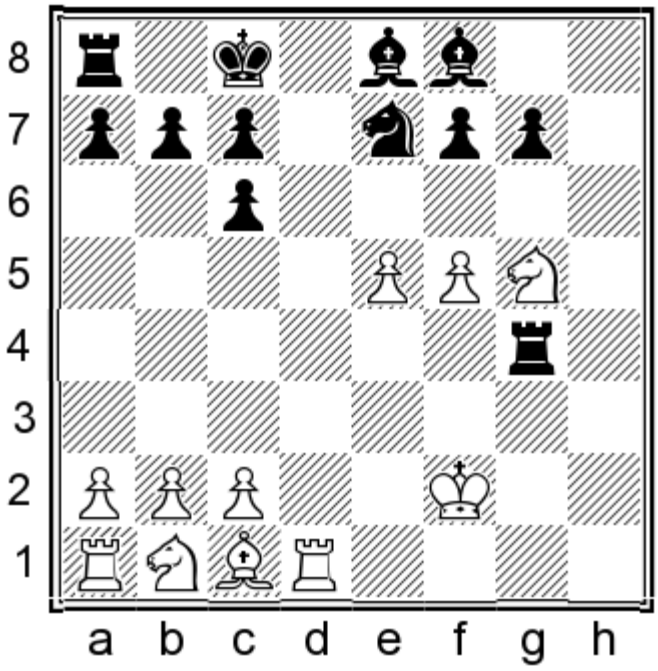
14...hxg4 15.hxg4 ♖h4

Black accepts the offer to play the "move-by-move" game.

16.♔f2

White cannot save his g4 pawn.

16...♖xg4



17.♖h1

That was White’s idea. ♖h8 is practically winning a piece!

17...♘xf5

What a funny position. White only has an active knight on g5 and the rest of his pieces are still on their starting positions.

18.♖h8

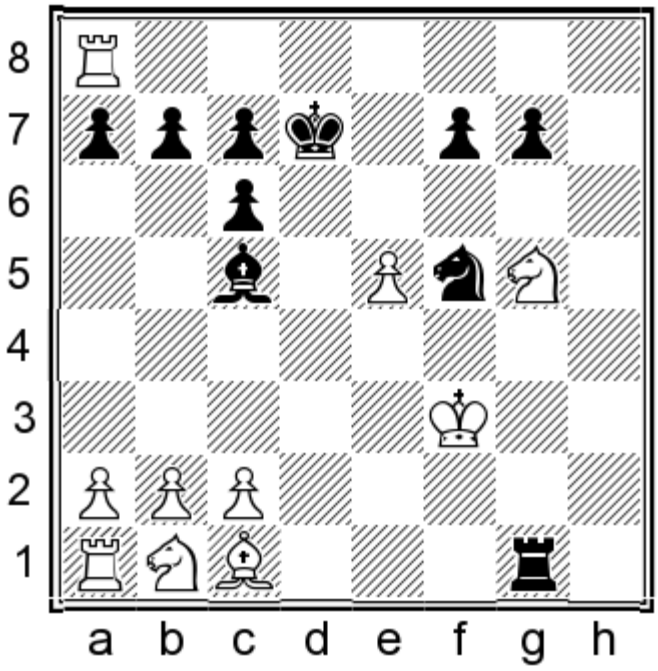
White is winning a full piece.

18...♗c5+

What an amazing position! Black is giving away a piece and a rook, but the position seems to be equal!

19.♔f3 ♖g1 20.♖xe8+ ♔d7 21.♖xa8

Everything seems to have been forced until here.



21...♘d4+

This check on d4 also seems to be the best move. Why? That is not so easy to answer, but after some analysis it seems to be the best.

22.♔e4

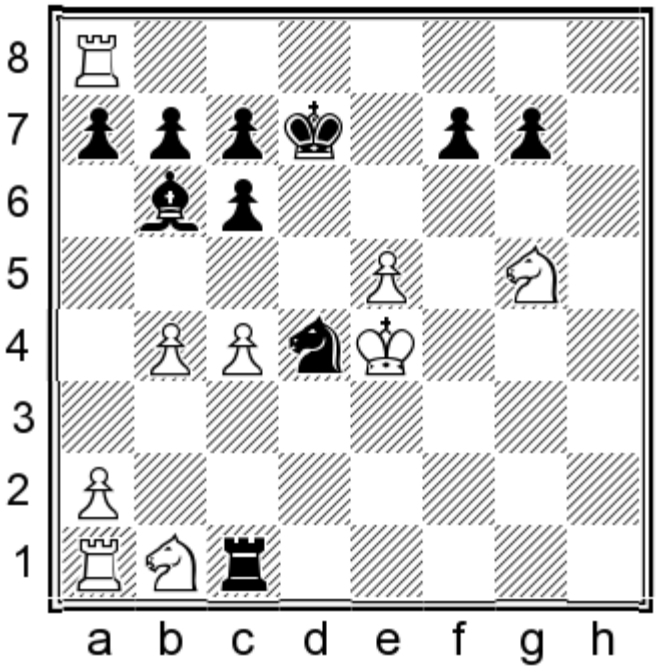
The only move.

22...♖xc1

White is a full rook up, but the b1 knight and a1 rook are totally out of the game. White's king on e4 is also under heavy attack and ...♘c2 could prove to be very unpleasant. Anyhow, a rook up is a rook up, so the game continues in a very tactical and forced way.

23.b4 ♗b6 24.c4

A very logical move by White. Now c5 is a deadly threat and by pushing the pawn forward, White is also winning space.

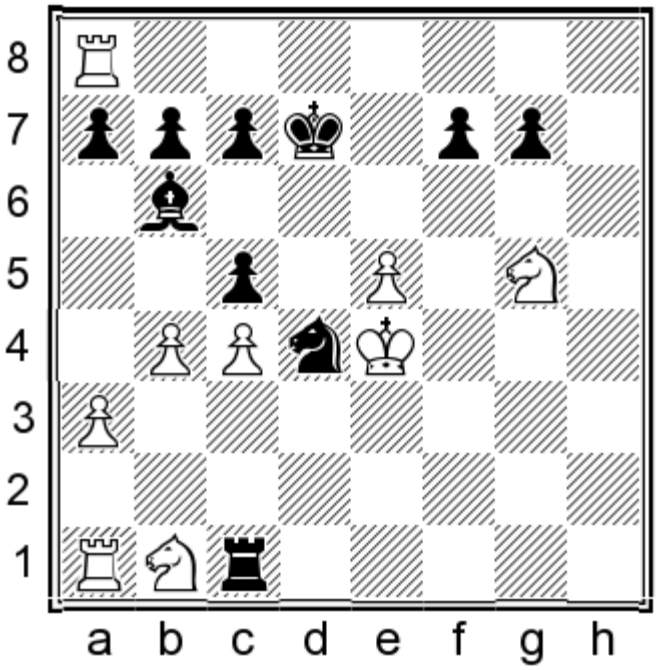


24...c5!

A great move! It is not easy to stay cool in such a position. I have a very strong feeling that Kramnik knew everything up to this point. It is very hard to evaluate the future of 24...c5, especially since White is now getting the d5 square for his king.

25.a3

White wants to play ♖a2 next, giving away the b1 knight, but he would still be an exchange up.



25...♖e1+!

Exactly! It is very funny, but White's king cannot escape from perpetual check! Amazing.

26.♔d3 ♖d1+ 27.♔c3

In case White tried to play for a win after 27.♔e3?! ♘c2+ 28.♔e2 ♖g1 it seems that Black is already better!

27...♖c1+ 28.♔d3 ♖d1+ 29.♔c3 ♖c1+ 30.♔d3

1/2

GAME 17
S. Mamedyarov (2753)
M. Carlsen (2864)
8th Tal Memorial Moscow RUS (9.2)
23.06.2013, [E62]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We are in the last round of the Tal Memorial. In the event of a win, Carlsen would share first place but in the case of a loss, Mamedyarov would overtake the World Number 1. So, the stakes are high.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6

Carlsen usually prefers to play the Nimzo or the Queen's Gambit.

3.♘c3 ♗g7

No Gruenfeld either.

4.♘f3 d6 5.g3

Mamedyarov is choosing a more "silent" system against the KID. It is obvious that Carlsen is looking for a "fight" in this game and is ready to play an "all-or-nothing" game. With 5.g3 Mamedyarov is making it clear that he prefers a "calmer" meeting at the chess board.

5...c6

A rare move. After 5...0-0 6.♗g2 ♘c6 we are of course back in the main-lines.

6.♗g2 ♗f5

This was Carlsen's idea to rapidly leave theory. But to be honest, this looks really strange to me. Can a move like 6...♗f5 be objectively good?! The move looks at the very least unnatural. and Mamedyarov will prove to us that nobody should entertain such "jokes" against him in the opening.

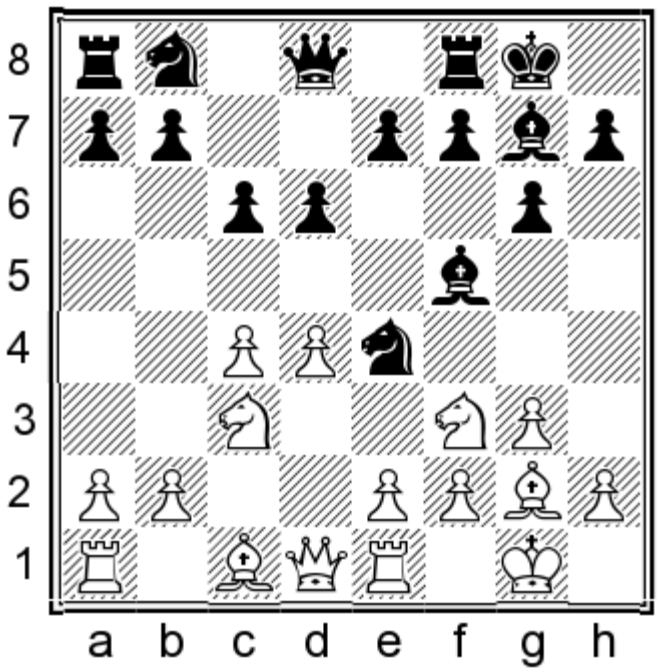
7.0-0 ♘e4

This is the main idea of ♗f5. Now the bishop on g7 is gaining a bit more activity and the exchange of a piece is clearly good for Black.

8.♖e1

White prepares to play e4 in the future.

8...0-0



9.♕b3!

A very strong move, forcing Black to make a decision.

9...♘xc3

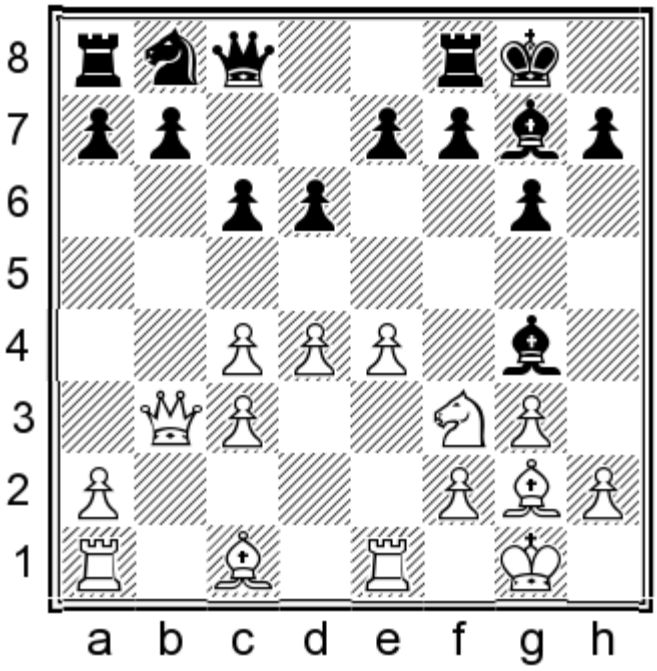
After 9...♕c8 10.♘h4! Black doesn't have ...♘xc3 with tempo anymore. 10...♘xc3 11.♘xf5 and White has a clear advantage.

10.bxc3

White's position looks very good! The b7 pawn is hanging and e4 is coming next.

10...♕c8 11.e4 ♗g4

We can clearly see that White is doing better here, but what to play next?



12.e5!?

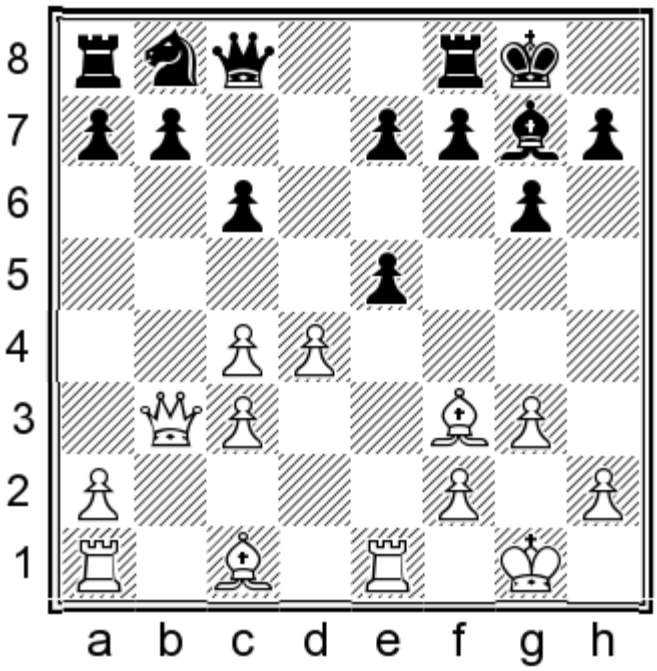
A strong idea. To include 12.♖b1 b6 13.e5 also looks very nice for White.

12...♗xf3

Not a nice move to play, but what else to do? White wanted to play the very unpleasant ♗g5 next. After 12...♘d7 13.exd6 exd6 14.♗f4! Black would lose the d6 pawn.

13.♗xf3 dxe5

Black is trying to destroy White's pawn structure, but Mamedyarov continues to play a great game.



14.♖b1!

A fantastic move! The b7 pawn is very important because it is shutting down the white bishop from f3. So, by forcing Black to play b6 or even winning the b7 pawn, White would achieve a big advantage.

14...exd4

After 14...b6 15.♗a3 White's initiative is very strong.

15.cxd4

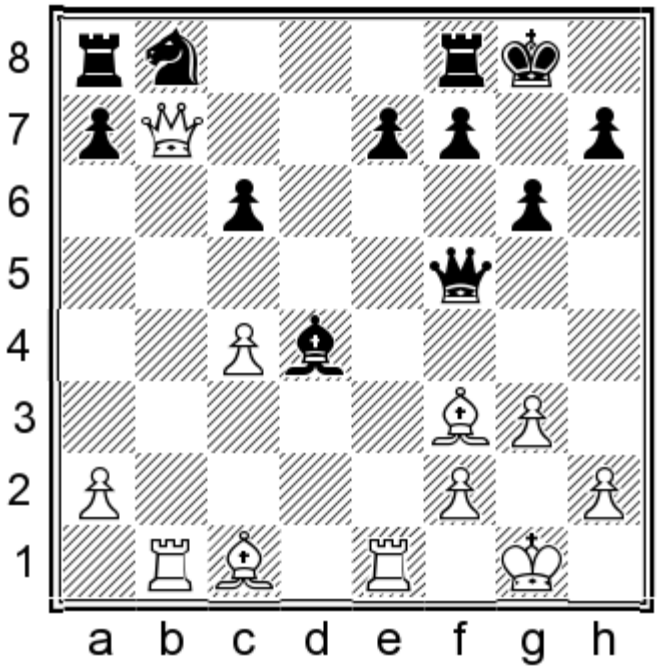
White does not hurry as Black cannot protect b7 and e7 at the same time.

15...♗xd4 16.♕xb7

The b7 pawn is, of course, the more important. We can clearly see that White already has quite a solid advantage.

16...♕f5

What a bluff by Magnus Carlsen! But it might be the best practical decision.



16...♕xb7 17.♖xb7 would lead to a very unpleasant endgame for Black.

17.♔g2?

This move still guarantees White a nice advantage, but White could have almost finished the game in one move after 17.♗b2!! ♗xb2 18.♕xa8 and White is just an exchange up. 18...♘d7 19.♕xa7 I think the game would soon be over here.

17...♘a6

Now Black is back in the game a little bit.

18.♗h6

White shows he is also in the game with this strong move. The bishop on h6 is a very irritating piece for the black king, who is now in big danger.

18...♘c5 19.♕xe7?!

Once again White misses his chance of finishing the game... 19.♕xc6! This move requires exact calculation, but again it is not too difficult to find. Usually it would have been a piece of cake for Mamedyarov. 19...♖fc8 20.♕xa8 ♖xa8 21.♗xa8 and White ought not be afraid of ♕xf2. 21...♕c8 (*21...♕xf2+ 22.♔h1 ♘d7 23.♖xe7* simply leads to mate!) 22.♗f3 Whites advantage should be close to winning.

19...♘d3 20.♖e4

Black still needs to play very accurately to not find himself in trouble again.

20...♗g7?!

A strange move. Why not simply play 20...♘e5! and Black is more or less fine.

21.♖d1 ♗xh6 22.♖xd3

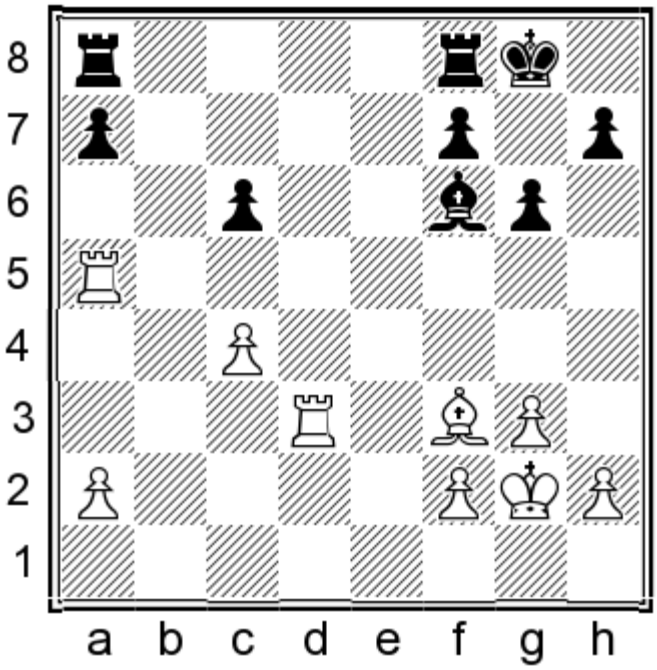
All the white pieces are very active and Black is going to lose at least the pawn on c6.

22...♗g5!

A very strong move! Black has to force the queen's exchange in order not to get mated. As we know, with opposite-colored bishops on the board, the attacking side has an extra advantage.

23.♕e5 ♕xe5 24.♖xe5 ♗f6 25.♖a5

25.♖c5 was perhaps a bit more precise.



25...♖fd8!

Another great move by Black! It would make no sense to try and keep the c6 and a7 pawns alive, as this is simply impossible. Instead Black is trying to create some counterplay.

26.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 27.♗xc6 ♖d2

White is winning both pawns on the queenside, but Black captures a very important pawn on f2.

28.♖xa7 ♗d4 29.♖d7 ♖xf2+ 30.♔h3 ♗e5

Black's idea is to play h5-g5-g4 next.

31.♖d5 ♗c7 32.♖d7 ♗e5 33.♖d5 ♗c7 34.♖d7

Mamedyarov was probably a bit upset to not reach more than this endgame, but of course even here White could have tried to play on for a win, with 33.a4 for example. The position is still quite tricky. I have asked myself many times how Carlsen does it?! It seems as though, against him, even great tactical players miss quite obvious strikes. :)

1/2

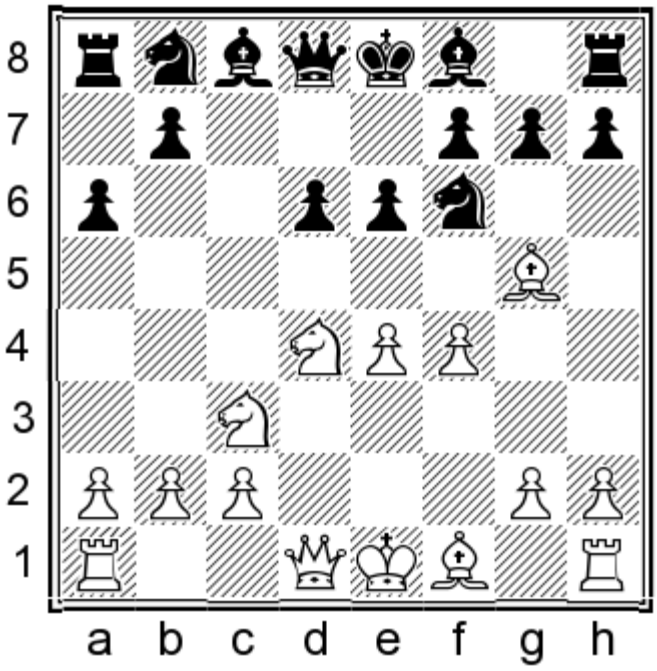
GAME 18
S. Karjakin (2782)
V. Anand (2786)
Moscow RUS Moscow RUS (9.4)
23.06.2013, [B97]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

A very sharp theoretical duel in the poisoned pawn variation of the Najdorf. It would be interesting to know the depth of preparation by both players. I can easily imagine that they had both analyzed everything until the final move of this game.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗g5

White goes for the sharpest setup against the Najdorf.

6...e6 7.f4



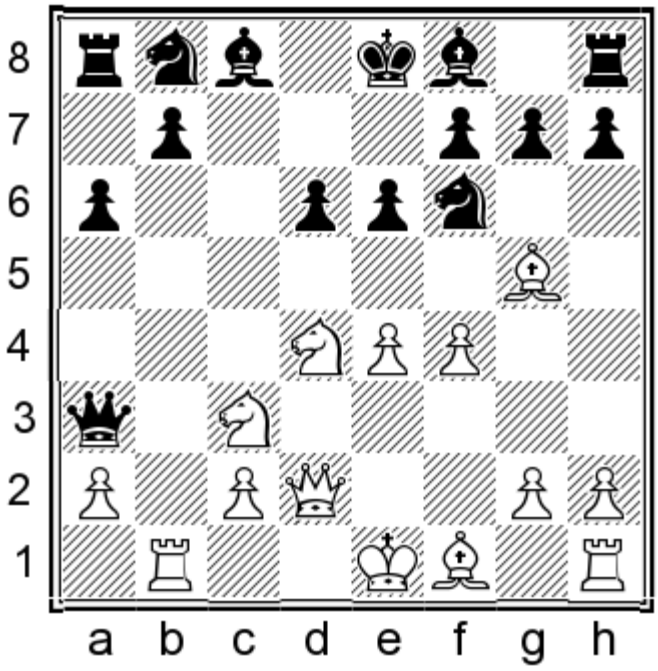
7...♕b6

Fischer’s favorite move is the most concrete option for Black with a direct attack against the b2 pawn. On the other hand, Black spends some very important tempi to grab that pawn, and his undeveloped pieces have led to many quick defeats. However, current theory is so deep here that — having analyzed everything with the strongest computers until move 25–30 — players with a good memory are ready to delve into the complications, as the lines are not worse for Black — usually they end with perpetual check. :) In many lines both sides are forced to make only moves, otherwise Black gets mated or White ends up with a material disadvantage and inadequate compensation.

8.♕d2

White has no good way to protect the b2 pawn; he does not want to play a move like ♖b1 as he wants to castle queenside.

8...♕xb2 9.♖b1 ♕a3



The true starting position of the poisoned pawn variation. White is the first to have a choice, and there are a couple of possibilities here.

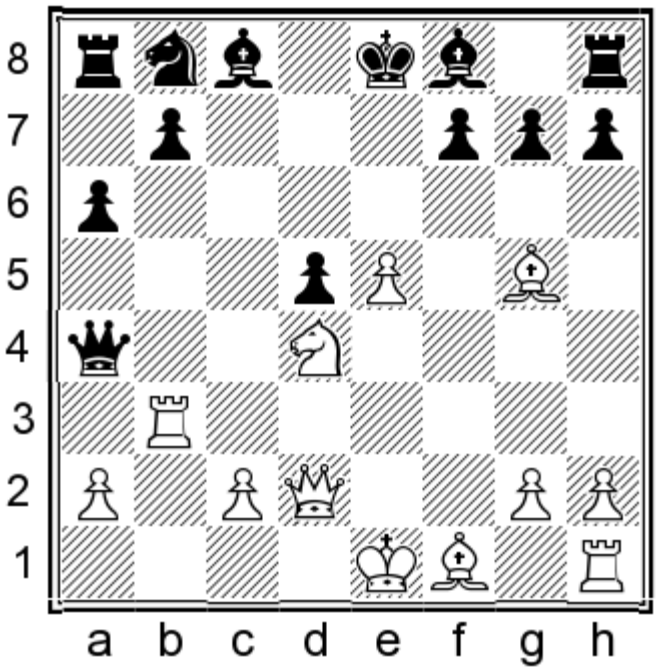
10.e5

This is the new wave. The old mainline is 10.f5.

10...h6

10...dxe5 11.fxe5 ♘fd7 is the start of another extremely complex game. The text move is currently considered to be the best.

(*11...♘d5* If Black wants to go for this option, it is extremely important to include the h6-♗h4 pair of moves because of the nice tactical trick of *12.♘xd5 exd5 13.♖b3 ♕a4*

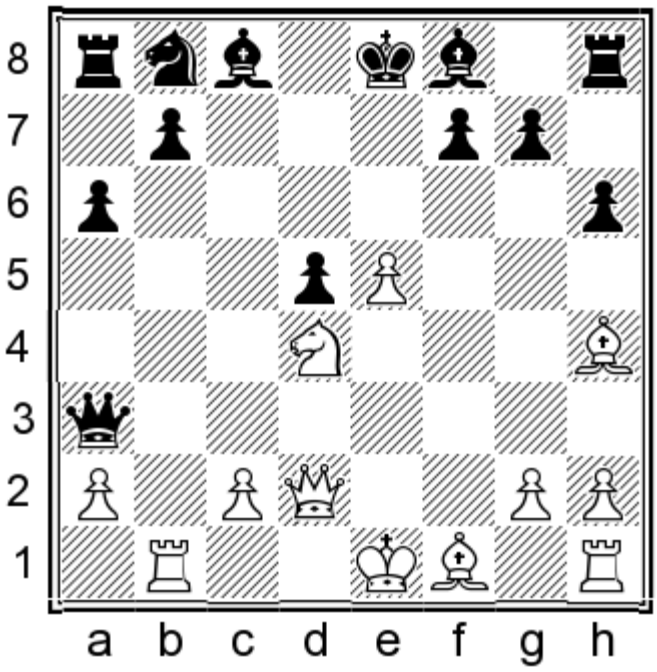


14.♘b5!! and Black cannot prevent ♘c7, while with the h6-♗h4 moves included the bishop would be hanging on h4! *14...axb5 15.♗xb5++–*)

11.♗h4 dxe5 12.fxe5 ♘d5

12...g5 and; 12...♘fd7 are also huge theoretical lines.

13.♘xd5 exd5



14.e6!

A principled move, in order to open the position in front of the king who is stuck in the center. 14.♖b3 ♕a4 15.♘b5

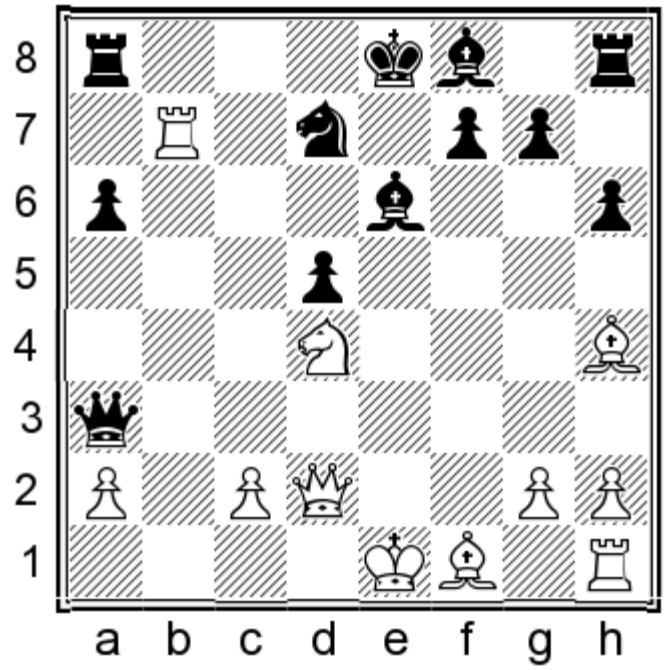
♕xh4+ is the point behind playing 10...h6 11.♗h4. After some “normal” moves like 14.♗d3 ♗c5 15.♗f2 ♘c6 Black develops his pieces and White finds himself simply a pawn down.

14...♗xe6 15.♖xb7

This is the novelty according to my database. The previous games continued with 15.♘xe6 fxe6 16.♗d3 ♗e7 17.♗g6+ ♔d8 when Black is already two pawns up, but his king cannot be said to be safe. 18.♗xe7+ ♕xe7 19.0-0 Creating the threat of ♖f7. 19...♘d7! 20.♖f7 (*20.♖xb7* was met by *20...♕c5+ 21.♔h1 ♖a7!* Black has more-or-less consolidated his position and he still has an extra pawn.) 20...♕c5+ 21.♔h1 ♖f8 22.♖xg7 ♖f6! and most of the games here ended in a draw by repetition: 23.♖g8+ ♖f8 24.♖g7 ♖f6

15...♗d6

Getting ready to castle. A logical developing move like 15...♘d7 perfectly illustrates the dangers of Black’s position.

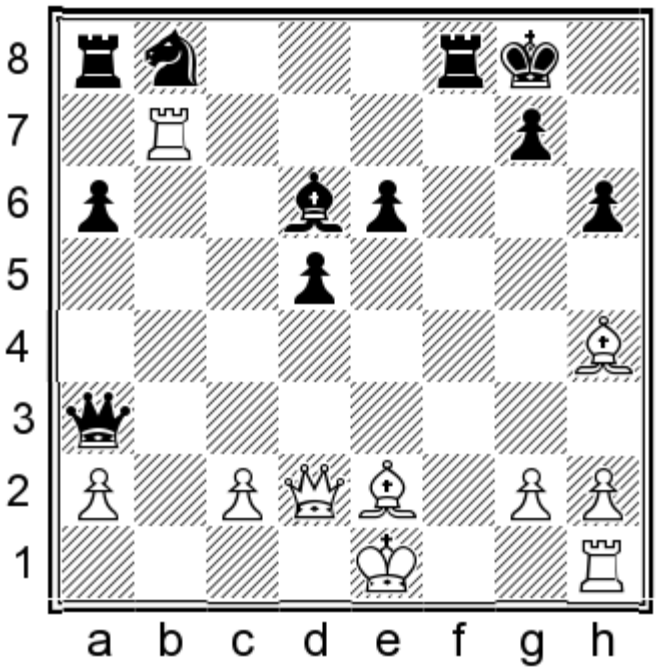


16.♗b5!! With the threat of ♘xe6 and the d7 pawn is hanging. 16...axb5 17.♘xb5 White threatens mate on c7 and taking the queen. Black can stay in the game with 17...♗b4! Freeing the f8 square for the king, but he still ends up in a bad position after 18.♘c7+! ♔f8 19.♖xb4 ♖c8 20.♘xe6+ fxe6 21.0-0+ ♔g8 22.c4!± Black hasn’t managed to solve the problem of his king and White has a strong attack.

16.♘xe6 fxe6 17.♗e2

17.♗d3 would deprive White of the option he had in the game. 17...0-0 and White cannot increase the pressure. 17.♖xg7?? is a terrible blunder because of 17...♗b4.

17...0-0



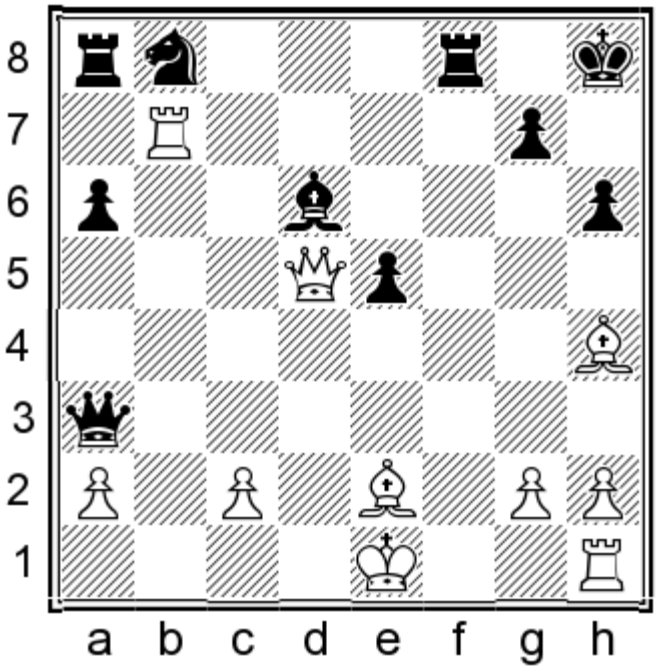
The difference between the previous move and 17.♗d3 is that White has

18.♕d4!

It is not so easy to deal with the threat against g7. At first sight, Black has three playable options, but only one of them works...

18...♖f7!

18...e5 leads to a worse endgame after 19.♕xd5+ ♔h8



20.♔d1!! Avoiding the queen checks on c3 and c1. Black cannot develop his b8 knight, which disturbs the co-ordination between the pieces. White threatens to play ♗d3 followed by ♕e4 or ♖b3 and the a8 rook is hanging. 20...♖f4! The only

move. 21.♖b3! ♖d4+ (*21...♕xa2 22.♖xb8++–* wins the a2 queen.) 22.♕xd4 exd4 23.♖xa3 ♗xa3 24.♗f3 ♖a7 25.♖e1± with material equality, but the bishop pair combined with the more active pieces give White a clear advantage. 18...♕c1+ is tempting, but it only helps White because after 19.♗d1! Black has nothing better than 19...♖f7 20.♖xf7 ♔xf7 21.0-0+! Castling with tempo and the queen gets into a pin on c1. 21...♔g8 22.♕b6+– (*22.♗g4* also wins.)

19.♖xf7 ♔xf7 20.0-0+ ♔g8

It feels like White should have some crushing move here, but he must lose an important tempo to prevent the threat of ♗c5.

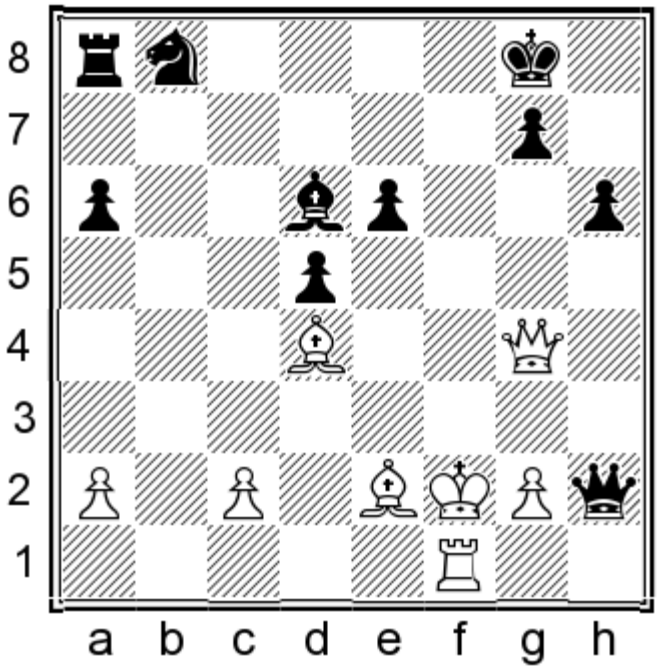
21.♕g4 ♕e3+ 22.♗f2

22.♔h1!? was another interesting try, after which Black has to defend precisely with 22...♘d7! (*22...♘c6* is refuted by *23.♗f6! ♗f8 24.♗d3!* with the threat of ♕g6-h7. *24...♘b4 25.♗d4! ♕g5 26.♕xe6+ ♔h8 27.♗g6+– and* Black cannot survive such pressure.) 23.♗d3 ♖f8 24.♖e1 ♘f6! This intermediate move is a key resource in Black's defence. 25.♖xe3 ♘xg4 26.♖xe6 ♗xh2 with an equal endgame.

22...♕e5 23.♗g3 ♕e3+ 24.♗f2 ♕e5 25.♗d4!?

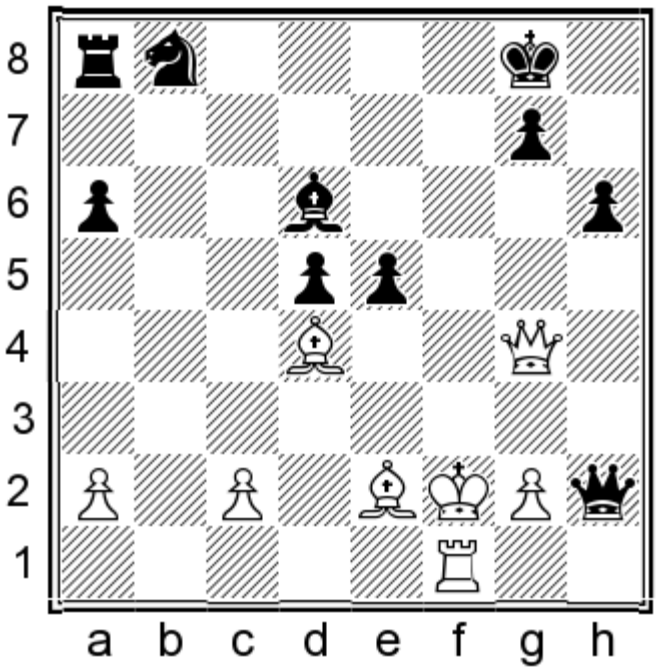
White could have agreed to a draw, but he tries another deep trick in an attempt to win the game.

25...♕xh2+ 26.♔f2



26...♕f4+!

Anand finds the last 'only move' and holds the draw. 26...e5? looked good as well, but White has a fantastic win here:



27.♔e1!! Opening the f-file for the rook, and creating a hidden threat. 27...♘c6 (*27...exd4* leads to a forced mate after *28.♕e6+ ♔h8 29.♕e8+ ♔h7 30.♗d3++–*) 28.♗g1!! This is the point and suddenly the queen finds herself trapped. 28...♕h1 29.♗c5+–

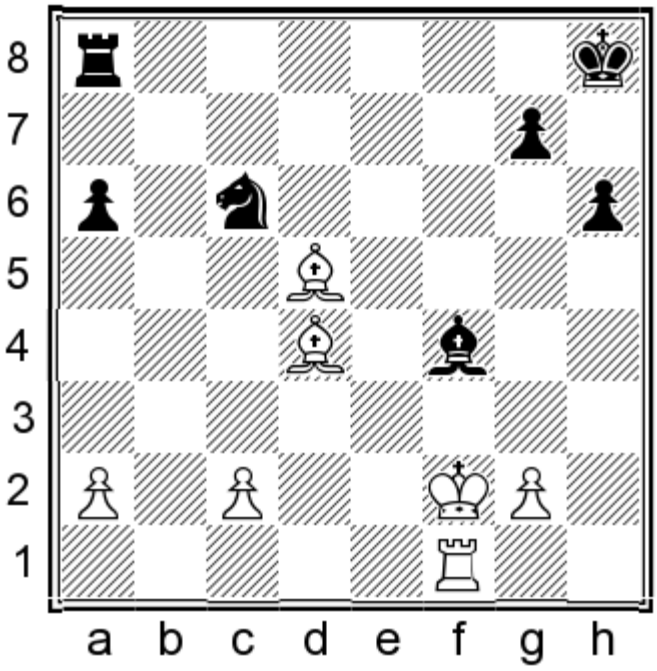
27.♕xf4 ♗xf4 28.♗g4

White is two pawns down at the moment, but he inevitably wins back the material.

28...♘c6

28...e5 looks like a blunder because of 29.♗e6+ ♔h8 30.♗xd5 but Black can still save the game: 30...♘c6! 31.♗xc6 ♖c8 32.♗b7 ♖c7=

29.♗xe6+ ♔h8 30.♗xd5



30...♖d8!

The last subtlety to get rid of the bishop pair. The game is a dead draw now.

31.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 32.♗xc6 ♖d2+ 33.♔f3 ♖xc2 34.♗e4

34.♔xf4 ♖xc6=

34...♖c1 35.♖xc1 ♗xc1

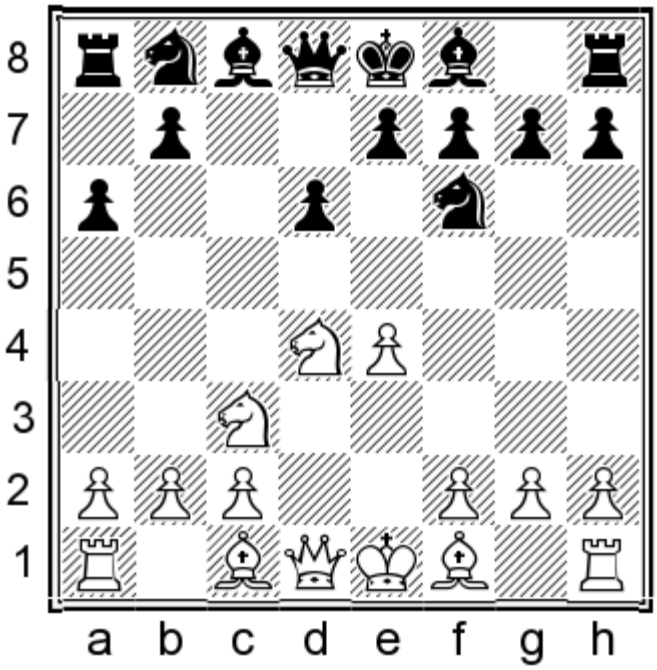
The 15.♖xb7 novelty was a nice try by Karjakin, but Anand was well prepared. Some slightly-weaker player would probably have fallen for one of the many traps, but the World Champion found all the only moves.

1/2

GAME 19
S. Karjakin (2776)
A. Grischuk (2780)
Grand Prix, Beijing
07.07.2013, [B80]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Karjakin had a dream start to this tournament as he won his first three games. The question was: who would be the first one to steal at least half-a-point from him? Grischuk bravely headed for a very sharp line of the Najdorf variation...

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6



The starting position of the Sicilian Najdorf, where White has to decide which system to play.

6.♗e3 ♘g4!?

This very interesting move was the favorite of Kasparov at that time. It might lead to very sharp lines after ♗g5, or White can return to c1 with his bishop and choose another option. Karjakin decided on the latter...

7.♗c1 ♘f6 8.f3

Usually the players who like to play 6.♗e3 keep the 6.f3 system as an alternative to avoid the complications of the ♘g4 line. However it also has some drawbacks, since he limits his opening possibilities.

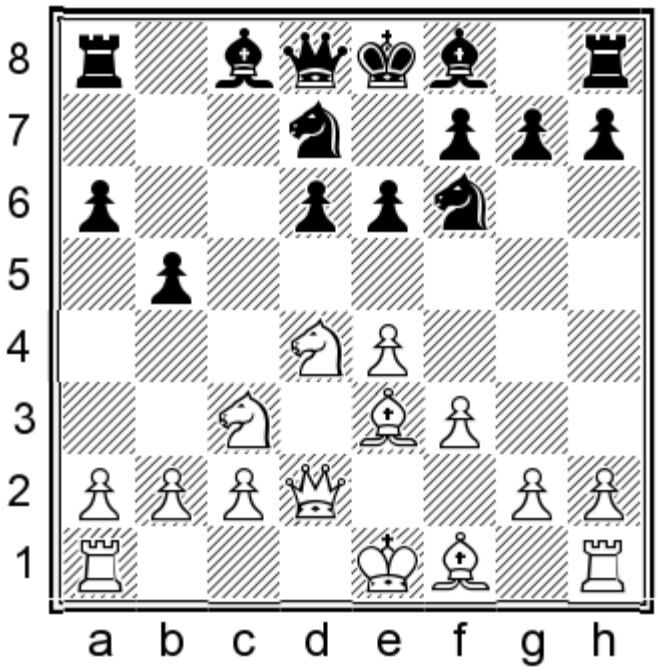
8...e6

Here is another difference, as in the 6.♗e3 e6 variation the 7.g4 move is considered to be a very aggressive attempt. For instance, after 8...e5 White is forced to play the main line with ♘b3 followed by a transposition with ♗e3, but he is deprived of the option of playing the dangerous 7.♘f3.

9.♗e3 b5

We are facing a typical Sicilian fight, where White is going to attack on the kingside with g4-g5, while Black tries his chances on the queenside. Naturally, there is huge theory behind all these variations.

10.♕d2 ♘bd7



11.g4

This is considered to be the most exact move order, to avoid the line 11.0-0-0 ♗b7 12.g4 ♘b6 where Kasparov has scored some nice victories.

11...h6

The difference is that if Black plays 11...♘b6 White has the strong 12.a4! ♘c4

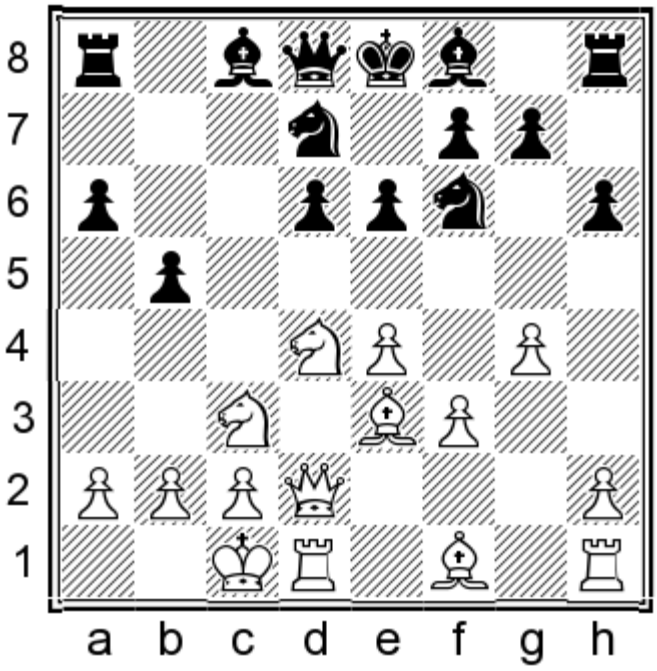
(*12...bxa4 13.♘xa4 ♘xa4 14.♖xa4 ♗b7 15.♘b3* followed by ♘a5, which was proven to be advantageous for White in some games.)

13.♗xc4 bxc4 and now White can choose between 14.g5

(or *14.a5* with the idea of ♘a4-b6, which is a rather positional handling of the position.)

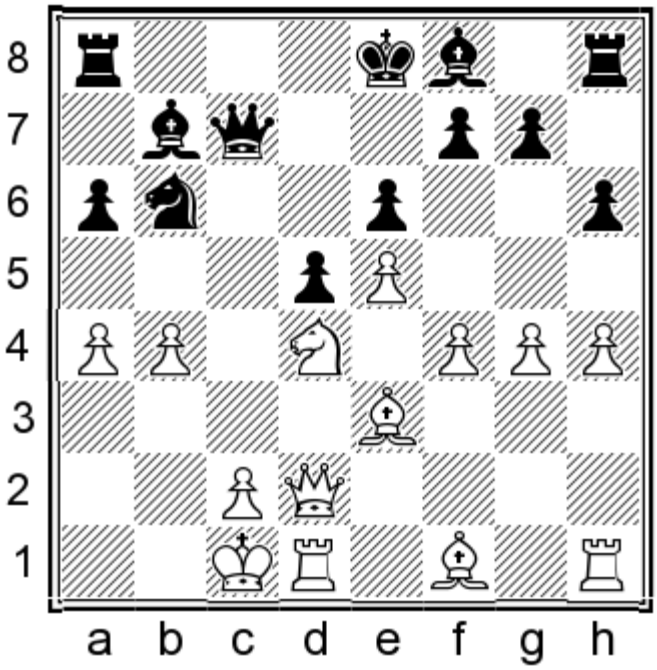
14...♘d7 15.f4 followed by f5 with an attack.

12.0-0-0



12...b4!

This is the modern handling of the opening. The huge previous main line continued with 12...♗b7 13.h4 b4 14.♘a4 ♕a5 15.b3 ♘c5 16.a3! ♘xa4 17.axb4 ♕c7 18.bxa4 whenWhite has won a pawn, but his king has become exposed. 18...d5 19.e5 ♘d7 20.f4 ♘b6 There are still hundreds of games in the database with this position, but after White found the idea of



21.♖h3! ♘xa4 22.♗f2! ♖c8 23.♗e1! White succeeded in organizing a successful defence, while his attack with f5 is going to be crushing. This line is more-or-less closed nowadays.

13.♘ce2 ♕c7

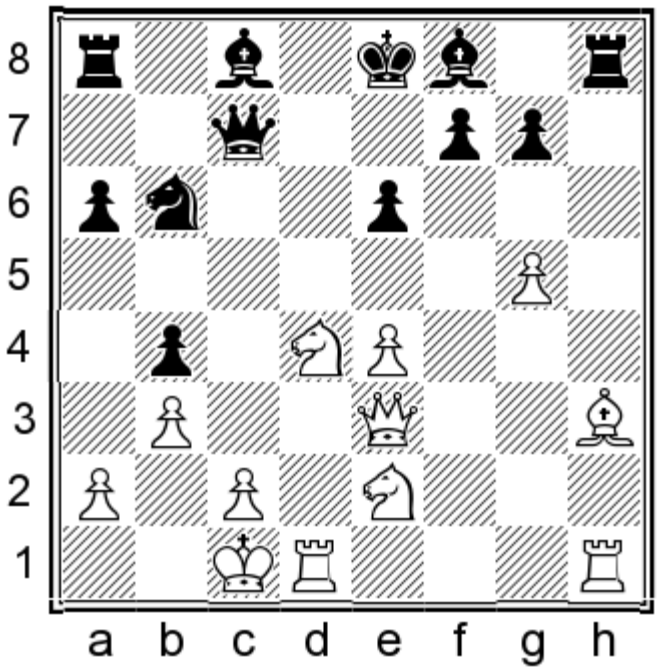
Black prepares for the typical Sicilian break with ...d5, which would have been slightly premature if played immediately... 13...d5 is met by 14.exd5 ♘xd5 15.♘f4! ♗b7 16.♗c4 and the different versions of sacrificing on e6 are too dangerous for Black.

14.h4!

White's attack is rolling fast. He only needs one preparatory move with ♗h3 (in order to close the h-file for g5 hxg5 hxg5) and he is already poised to finish the game. Black is forced to act now.

14...d5! 15.♗f4

White is again following the new wave of fashion. 15.♗h3 was played by Karjakin in 2011, but he lost after impressive preparation: 15...♘b6! 16.b3 dxe4 17.g5 ♘fd5 18.fxe4 ♘xe3 19.♕xe3 hxg5 20.hxg5



20...g6! This is a useful way to stop the g6 idea (which would critically weaken the e6 square) and also to fianchetto the bishop. 21.♔b1 ♗g7 22.♖hf1 ♕e5! 23.♕f2 ♖a7! and Black had the advantage in Karjakin-Cheparinov, Porto Carras 2011.

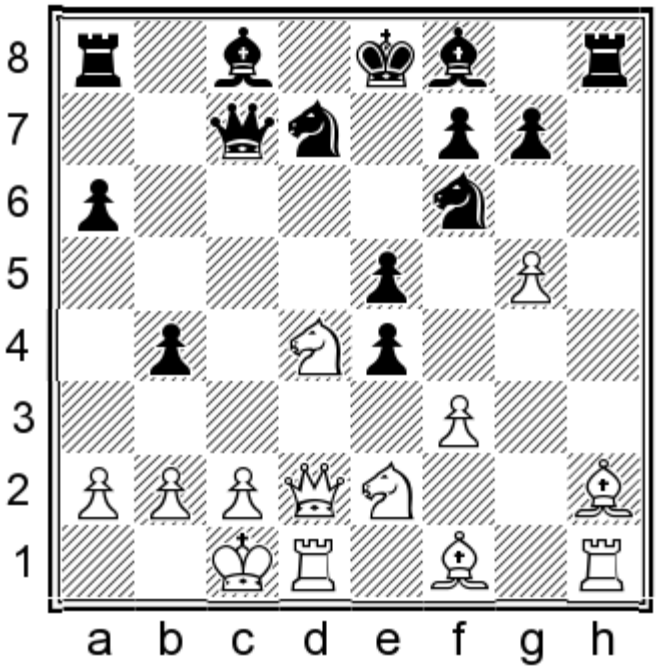
15...e5 16.♗h2!

With his previous bishop moves, White has prepared to push g5 by closing the h-file, and also weakened Black's structure in front of his king. We are still just at the beginning of theory and, of course, the deep computer analyses are extremely important in such lines.

16...dxe4 17.g5!

There is no way back, the position is getting sharper with each move.

17...hxg5 18.hxg5



18...♖xh2!

Black wins some material by unpinning his queen, but his king remains in the center and his position remains really scary...

19.♖xh2 exd4

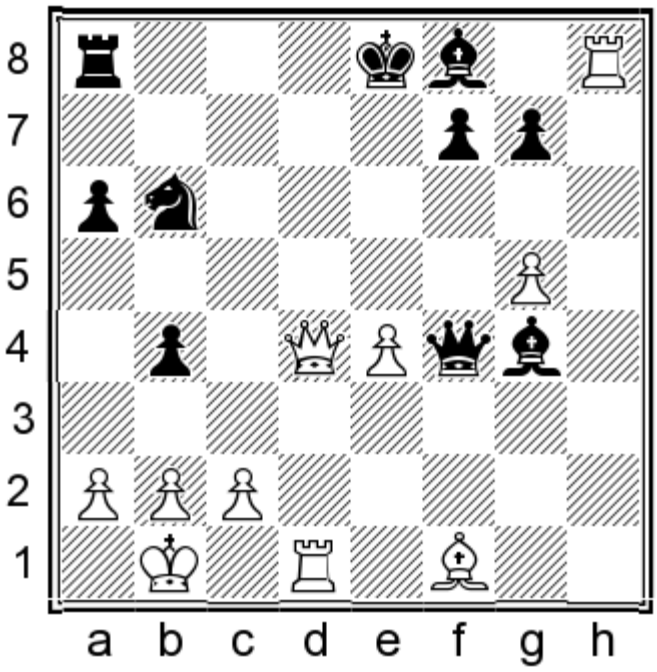
White cannot take on f6, since the rook is hanging on h2.

20.♖h8

20.♖h4!? is an alternative for White, which has been tested in only a few games. Black has not proven equality so far, but we can be sure that both Karjakin and Grischuk had something in their preparations. The text move seems to be more frightening at first sight.

20...♘d5 21.♕xd4 ♗b7!

All mistakes are critical in such positions. Black once played 21...♘7b6 but quickly lost after 22.fxe4 ♘f4 23.♘xf4 ♕xf4+ 24.♔b1 when Black is helpless against the threats of ♕d8, ♕xb6 and ♕xg7. 24...♗g4



25.♕xb6! ♗xd1 26.♕c6+ ♔e7 27.♕xa8 ♕xf1 28.♕xf8+ and White soon mated the naked king in Eliseev-Sethuraman, Moscow 2013.

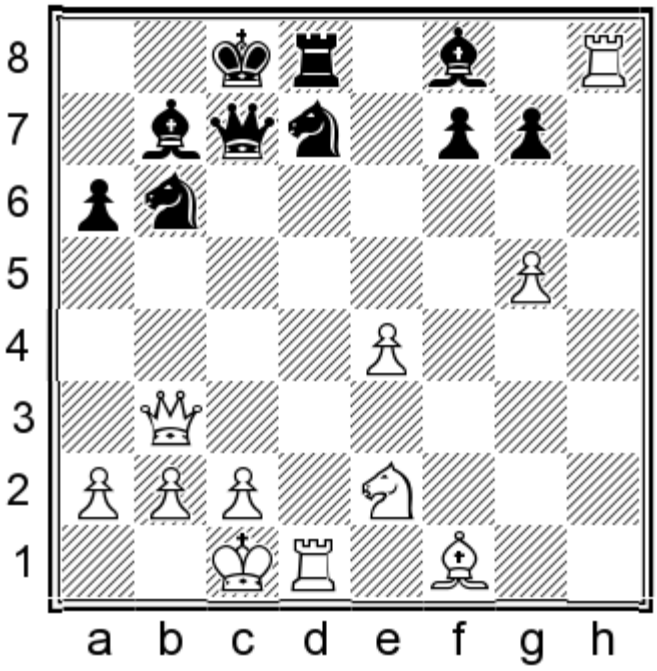
22.fxe4

Grischuk had already had recent experience in this position, where his opponent forced him to draw after 22.♕xe4+ ♘e7 23.♕xb4 ♘g6! 24.♖g8 ♘e7! 25.♖h8 ♘g6 26.♖g8 ♘e7 27.♖h8 with an unusual repetition of moves.

22...♘5b6!

Black is finally ready to evacuate his king to safety by castling queenside. Once again after 22...♘e7 White has two promising continuations: 23.♕xd7+ (*23.♗h3* also looks good.) 23...♕xd7 24.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 25.♖xd7 ♗xe4 26.♖d4± and White ends up with an extra pawn after taking on b4.

23.♕xb4 0-0-0 24.♕b3



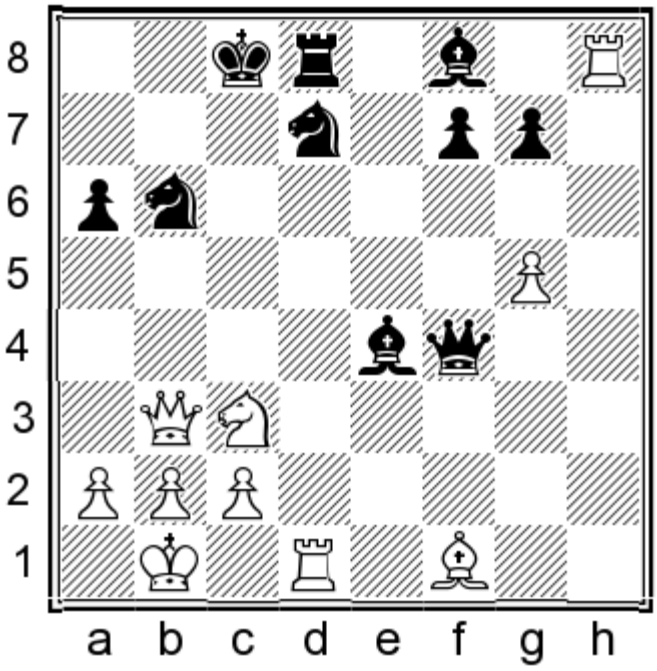
24...♗xe4!

This is (finally!) the novelty of our game. It's a clear improvement on the previous 24...♗c5 25.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 26.♕xf7 ♕xg5+ 27.♔b1 ♕e5 28.♗h3 when White maintained his strong attacking chances.

25.♘c3

White suddenly creates a triple attack by covering the c2 square. The a6 and f7 pawns, and also the ♗e4, are hanging. Black seems to be in trouble, but an important detail saves him! Instead, after 25.♗h3, Black would probably play 25...♗e7 26.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 27.♔b1 ♔e8 Materially White is still slightly ahead, but Black soon takes over the initiative with his active pieces. The knight is coming to c5 or the g5 pawn can be taken.

25...♕f4+! 26.♔b1



26...♔c7!!

A subtle move, which creates the decisive threat of ♘c5. The point is that White does not take on d8 with check anymore and therefore Black can simply take on b3.

27.♗xa6

27.♘xe4? loses to 27...♘c5!–+

27...♘c5! 28.♘b5+!

White cannot play for a win anymore, because after 28.♕b5 ♖xd1+ 29.♘xd1 ♕d2–+ he is the one who gets mated.

28...♔c6 29.♘a7+!

and the following repetition is inevitable for both sides.

29...♔c7 30.♘b5+ ♔c6 31.♘a7+ ♔c7

A draw was agreed here. An important theoretical game, which was probably analysed by both players until the very end. This is where chess is on the highest level nowadays.

1/2

GAME 20
P. Leko (2737)
G. Kamsky (2763)
FIDE GP Beijing Beijing CHN (8)
12.07.2013, [B15]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

For Kamsky the FIDE Grand Prix in Beijing was just a nightmare. Gata was fighting hard in every game, but things were just not running well. In the current game, White quickly achieved a nice advantage, developed this advantage... and then spoiled it by allowing a draw. We can very often see this in Leko's games. He plays very "good" chess, but is so unpractical at some moments. Anyhow, we can learn a lot from the current game!

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 g6

Clearly not the most popular move.

4.h3!

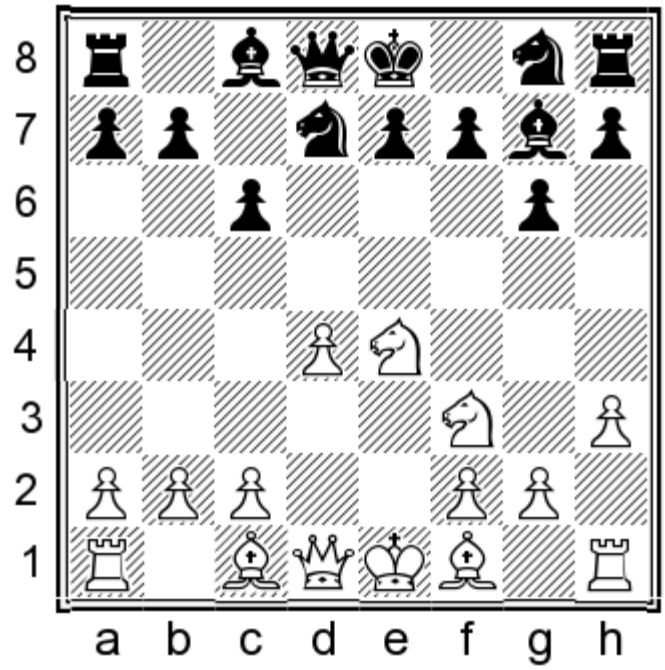
I like this move a lot! The idea is simply to play ♘f3 next and avoid Black's ♗g4. In case of 4.♘f3, then ...♗g4 would probably have been played.

4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♗g7 6.♘f3

We can see that the bishop on c8 has no good development squares.

6...♘d7

A logical move, in order to play ♘gf6 next.



7.♗c4!?

This move has of course been played many times, but it is still an important move. The bishop finds its best position on c4 and it also avoids Black's ♗e6 — another idea could be to play ♘e5 and put pressure on the f7 pawn.

7...♘gf6 8.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖e1

Another nice move. Black has no real ideas on how to finish his development and White still has a lot of useful moves, like for example c3.

10...b6

Black decides to develop his bishop to b7, which is a good idea in general, but White will now get very direct play.

11.♘e5

Wasting no time.

11...♗b7 12.♗g5

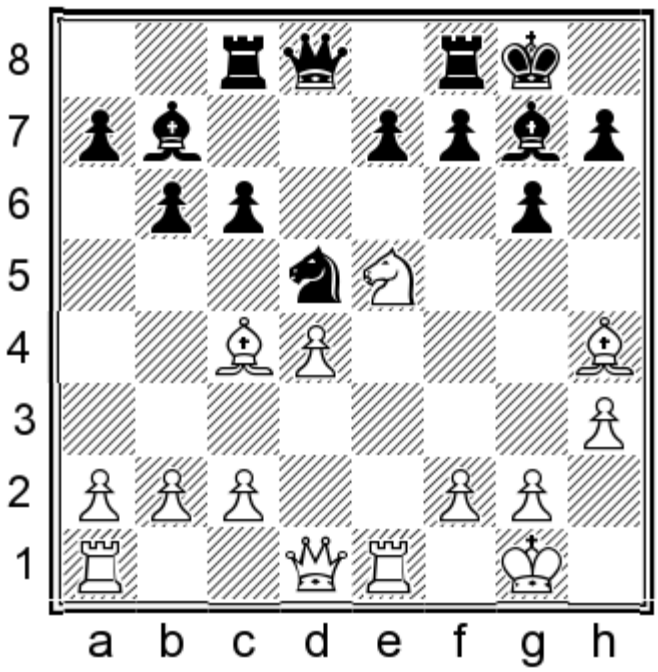
Leko maneuvers his pieces to perfect positions.

12...♘d5 13.♗h4

A typical “Leko” move. A more direct and perhaps stronger move was 13.♘g4 and it is not easy for Black to defend the e7 pawn in a reasonable way.

13...♖c8

Black prepares the c5 move.



14.♕f3

And Leko of course doesn’t give Black this chance.

14...g5

A try aimed at somehow getting out of the very unpleasant pin ♗h4-d8. If Black tried to play 14...c5 then after 15.♖ad1 White would almost be winning.

15.♗g3 e6

Black fixes the center but the g5 pawn is a huge weakness.

16.♗b3!

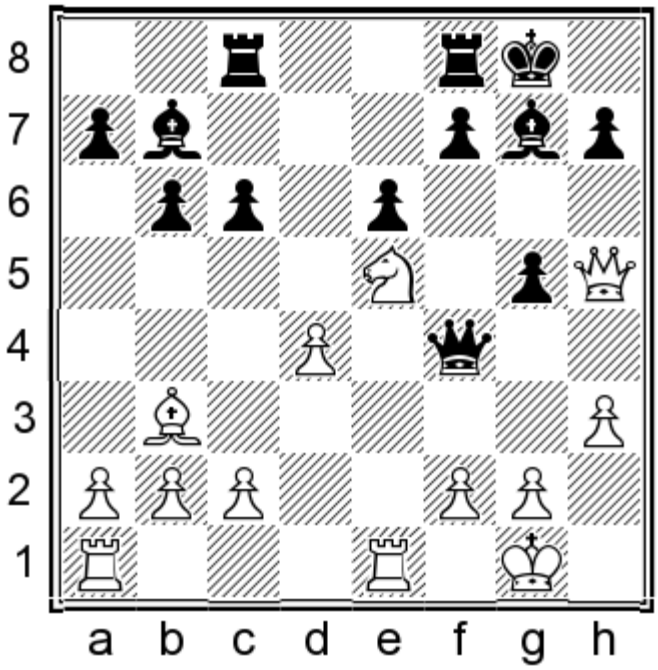
This time Leko does everything right. White wants to play c4 next, which can be very unpleasant for Black.

16...♕f6 17.♕h5

White, of course, doesn't want to exchange the queens.

17...♘f4 18.♗xf4 ♕xf4

We are now at an important moment in the game. It is clear that White is better, but how much better is the question...? White needs to take active measures against the Black king. If Black manages to consolidate, White will lose almost all his advantage.



19.c3?!

Mr. Leko, why so slow?! 19.g3! would have been the right reaction, giving Black no chances to escape into an endgame. 19...♕xd4 20.♖ad1 ♕c5 I guess it feels like White should be crushing here, and in fact White does so with a very nice move: 21.c3! with the deadly threat of ♗c2!

19...♕h4!

Exactly! Black escapes into an endgame where White's chances of winning are getting progresively smaller.

20.♕xh4 gxh4 21.♖e4

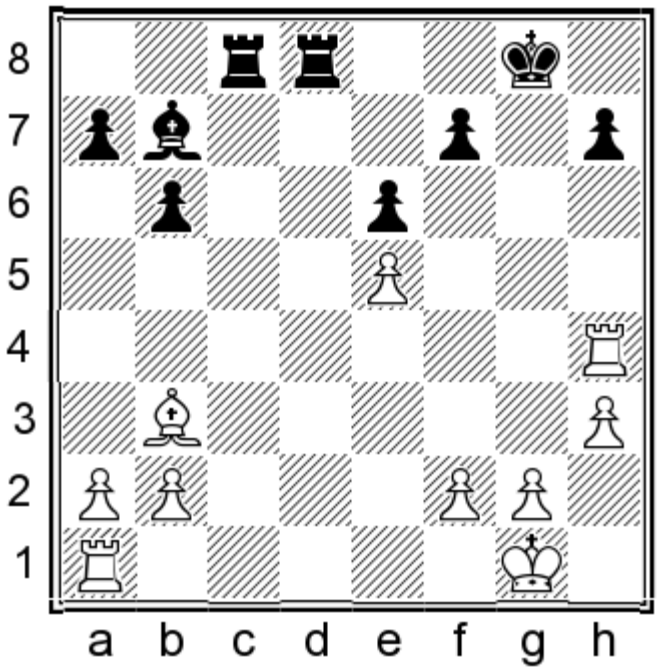
White is going to win the h4 pawn.

21...c5 22.♖xh4 cxd4 23.cxd4 ♗xe5?!

Why be in such a rush to give the bishop away?! 23...♖fd8 was easier and after 24.♖e1 ♗d5 Black has very good chances to save the game.

24.dxe5 ♖fd8

White cannot stop the black rook from entering the 2nd rank, but being a clear pawn up naturally gives White an advantage.



25.♖e1?!

White misses his chance. It was too early for 25.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 26.♗xd1 ♖c5 as Black wins the e5 pawn back. However, the following move looks very strong: 25.♖a4! making space for f4. 25...a5 26.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 27.♗xd1 ♖c5 28.f4 with good winning chances for White.

25...♖d2 26.♖f4

White wants to bring the rook to g3 via e3, but Black gets enough counterplay.

26...♖c5 27.♖e3

and now

27...♗d5!

A very strong move! By getting rid of the bishop on b3, Black is not only defending against ♖g3-♔f8 and ♗xe6, but also putting White in danger of losing both pawns, b2 and a2.

28.♗xd5 ♖cxd5

It seems that by not playing dynamically enough, White has lost all his advantage.

29.♖g3+ ♔f8 30.♖gf3 ♖d7

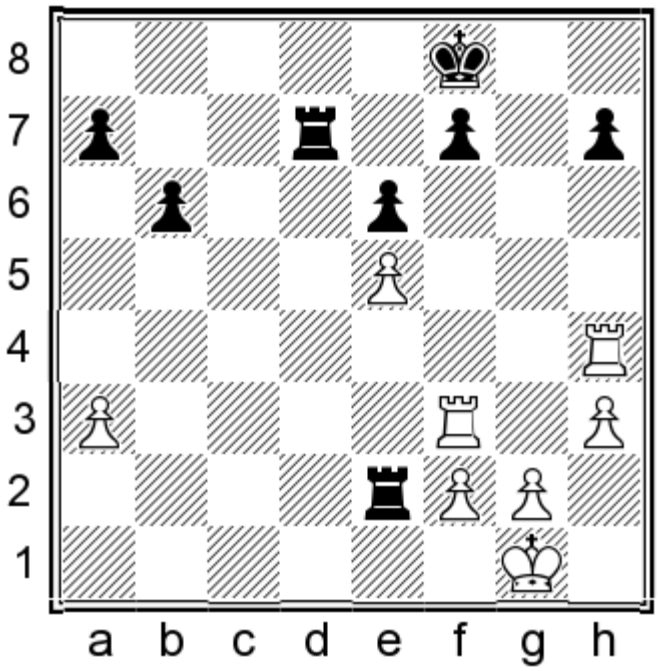
The b2 pawn is still hanging...

31.♖h4 ♖xb2 32.a3

After 32.♖xh7 ♖xa2 only Black could dream of winning.

32...♖e2

Gaining the e5 pawn in exchange for the h7 one.



33.♖xh7 ♖xe5 34.♖h8+ ♔g7 35.♖b8

We can now clearly say that the position is just equal.

35...♖e4 36.g4 ♖ed4 37.♖a8

Both players are trying to take the draw as soon as possible... The game is over.

37...♖d3

This move forces the draw.

38.♖xd3 ♖xd3 39.♖xa7 ♖xh3

The rest of the game does not need any comment.

40.♔g2 ♖b3 41.a4 ♖a3 42.♖a6 ♔g6 43.♖xb6 ♖xa4

A nice defence by Black and we can see how important it is in chess to “finish off” your opponent with dynamic play if you can, before he escapes. :)

1/2

GAME 21
D. Andreikin (2716)
V. Kramnik (2784)
FIDE World Cup 2013 Tromso NOR (7.2)
31.08.2013, [D37]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

This is the second game of the match and because Andreikin lost the first one he needs to at least try and put some pressure on the “rock” that is Kramnik.

1.d4

After 1.e4 Kramnik would play his Berlin Wall and for the last 10 years it appears to be a wall lacking even the smallest hole.

1...♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗e7

As in the first game, we have a Queen’s Gambit on the board. This time Andreikin chooses

5.♗f4

5.♗g5 was played by Kramnik.

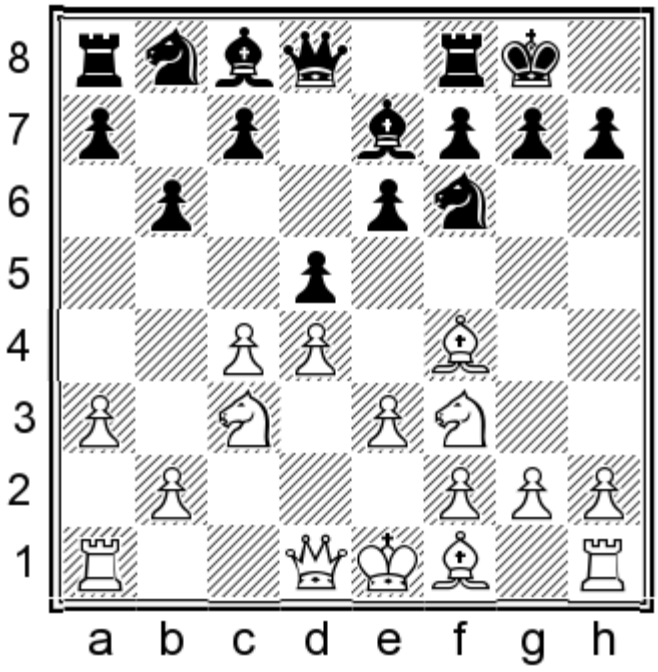
5...0-0 6.a3

White has tried almost all the different move orders here, but of course the main one is 6.e3.

6...b6

This is Black’s usual plan.

7.e3



7...c5!

Probably the simplest — and strongest — move. 7...♗b7 8.cxd5 also leads to a position which is close to a draw, but here Blacks has to suffer for a while.

8.♕c2!

Maybe the most critical move! White quickly tries to get the rook from a1 into the game, and he also waits for Black's ...dxc4 in order to play ♗xc4 without wasting a tempo on playing ♗d3 first.

8...cxd4

After 8...♗b7 White would have the idea of playing 9.dxc5!? bxc5 10.cxd5 exd5 and 11.♖d1 with a complex position, which of course in the current match situation would be perfect for Andreikin. He needs to search for his chances in complicated play.

9.♘xd4 ♗b7 10.♖d1

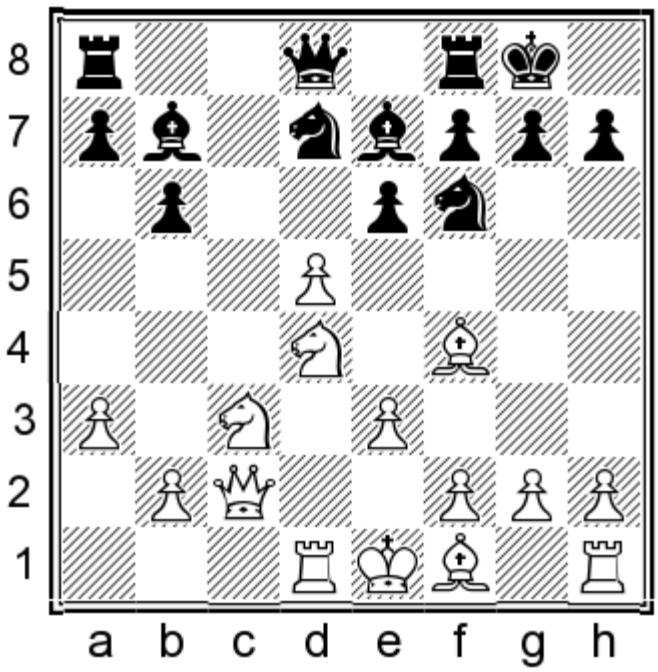
The rook is perfectly placed here.

10...♘bd7

Black wants to play ♖c8 next, after which the position would be equal, but...

11.cxd5!

Exactly the right play! It is hard to say if White has any advantage here, but Andreikin is clearly exerting some pressure.



11...e5?

A mistake which could have cost Black the game. 11...♘xd5! would have been the right choice. 12.♘xd5 ♗xd5 Black's position looks a bit scary, but it seems as though he is fine. 13.♘c6 (*13.e4 ♖c8!* The only move. *14.♕b1 ♗c4* And this position should be close to equal.) 13...♖c8 White doesn't have much of an advantage here either.

12.♘c6!

This is exactly why 11...e5 was a serious mistake.

12...♗xc6

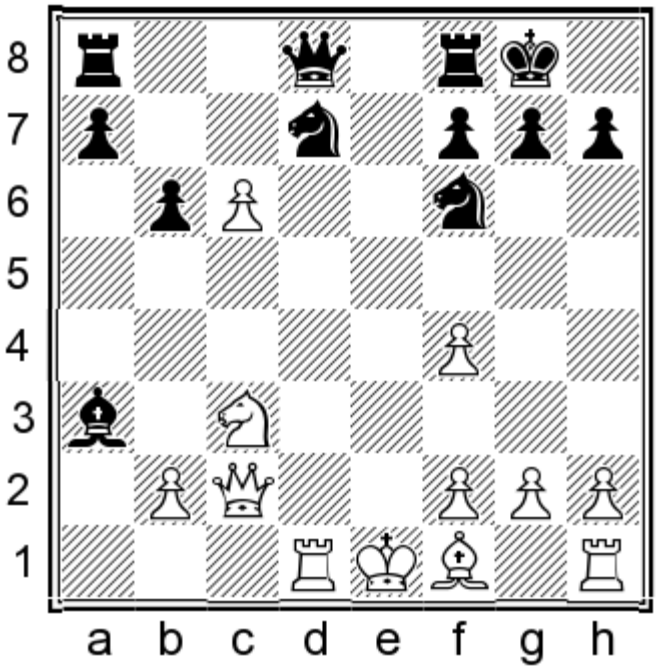
Black doesn't have a choice.

13.dxc6 exf4 14.exf4!

Cool and strong!

14...♗xa3

Black probably doesn't have anything better.



15.bxa3?

And White throws away all his chances in one move at such an important moment! The correct move was, of course, 15.cxd7! ♗b4 16.♗b5 when White's very strong pawn on d7 would secure at least a big advantage.

15...♕e8+!

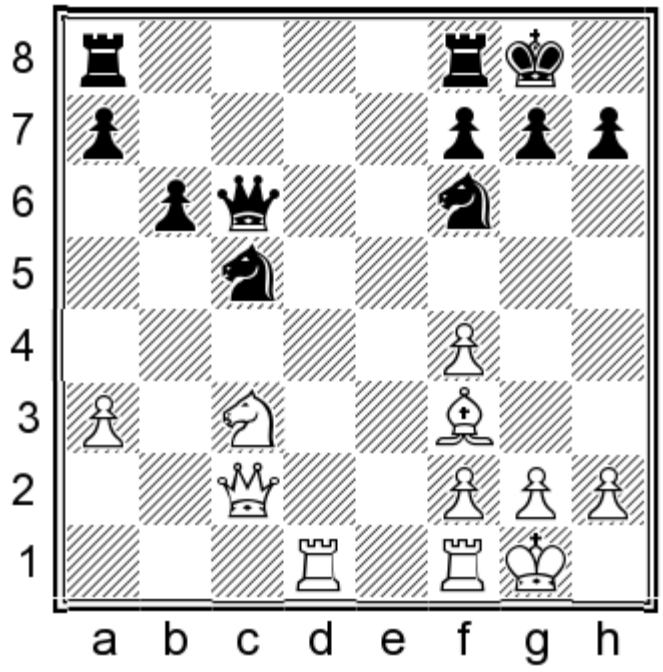
A perfect move! Now we enter a forced line which almost leads to a draw.

16.♗e2

White doesn't have a better move.

16...♘c5 17.0-0 ♕xc6 18.♗f3

At first sight it looks like Black is losing the exchange, but of course Kramnik just needs a small look at the position to find



18...♘ce4!

This is probably what Andreikin missed when he played 15.bxa3.

19.♖c1

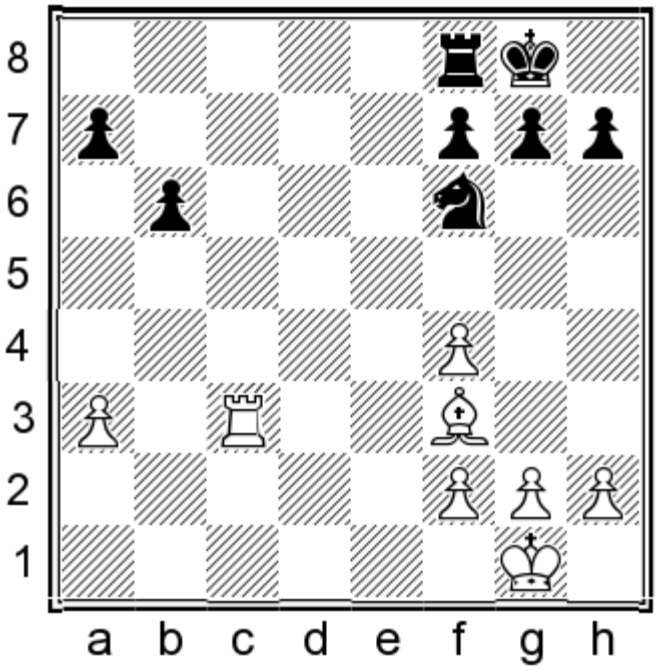
And White is forced to enter this endgame.

19...♕xc3 20.♕xc3 ♘xc3 21.♖xc3 ♖ac8

The exchange of one pair of rooks is almost never wrong for the defensive side.

22.♖fc1 ♖xc3 23.♖xc3

I remember that when I was watching this game live, Kramnik had a very serious think in this position, for about 25 minutes. And indeed the position is close to a draw, but to secure it is not so simple. White wants to put his rook on the 7th rank and get the bishop to the a2-g8 diagonal, after which it is not going to be easy for Black to defend the f7 and the a7-b6 pawns at the same time.



23...♖e8!

A very precise move. Black wants to put his rook on the 7th rank as soon as possible.

24.g4

White is trying to create at least some chances.

24...♔f8

With the same idea of playing ♖e7 next.

25.g5

Maybe White's last chance. Where to place the knight now?!

25...♘g8!

Once again Kramnik shows great endgame technique, not giving White any chances. Black is willing to play g6 followed by ♘e7-♘f5, covering the most dangerous squares.

26.♔g2?!

This move gives away even the smallest practical chance White held before. The only try was probably to play 26.h4 ♘e7 and now 27.♖c7 White needs the 7th rank! 27...♘g6 28.♖xa7 ♘xh4 29.♗c6 with some — very small — chances to win the game.

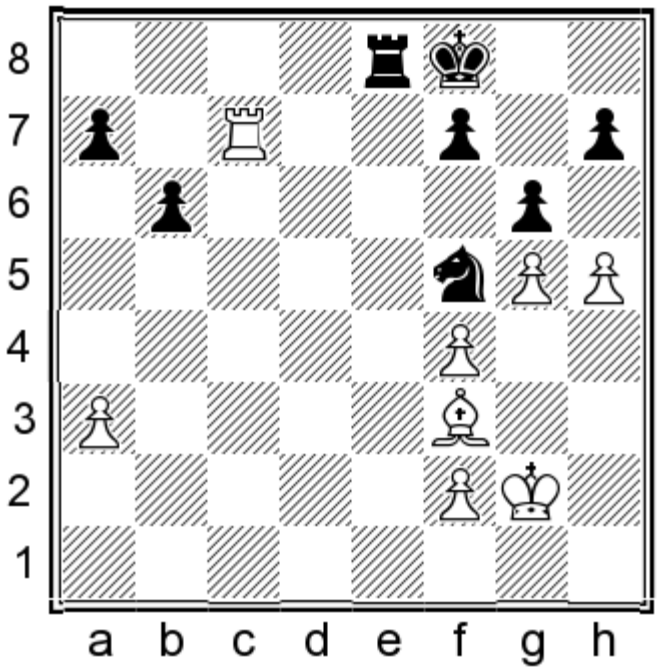
26...g6

The structure is fixed, so now the only thing Black needs to do is to bring his knight to f5.

27.h4 ♘e7 28.♖c7 ♘f5

and Black is in time!

29.h5



29...♖e7

Everything is protected.

30.♖c8+ ♖e8 31.♖c7 ♖e7 32.♖c8+ ♖e8 33.♖c7

A really nervous game from both players and Andreikin missed a great chance to bounce back into the match!

1/2

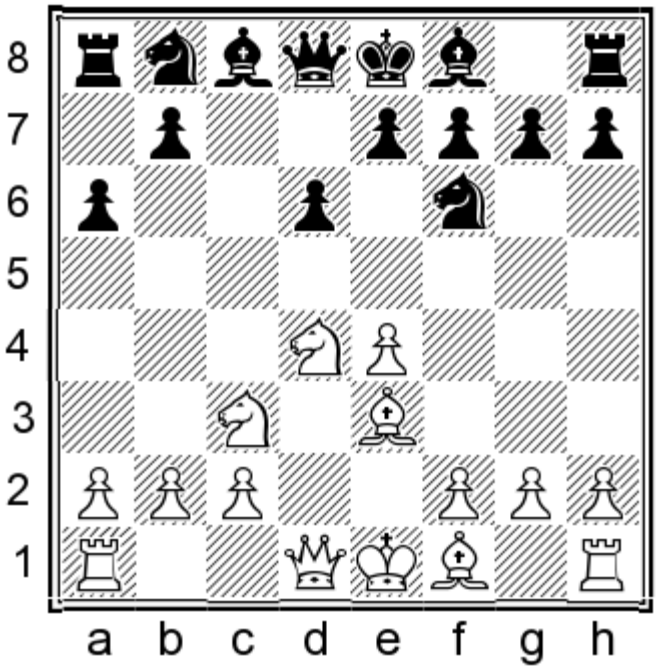
GAME 22
G. Kamsky (2741)
H. Nakamura (2772)
Sinquefield Cup 2013 Saint Louis USA (6.2)
15.09.2013, [B90]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Before the game, Nakamura had a theoretical chance of catching Carlsen. It was clear that he would try his best to beat the out-of-form Kamsky with the black pieces, but it almost backfired.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6

The Sicilian Najdorf is a very good opening to fight for a win with both colors.

6.♗e3



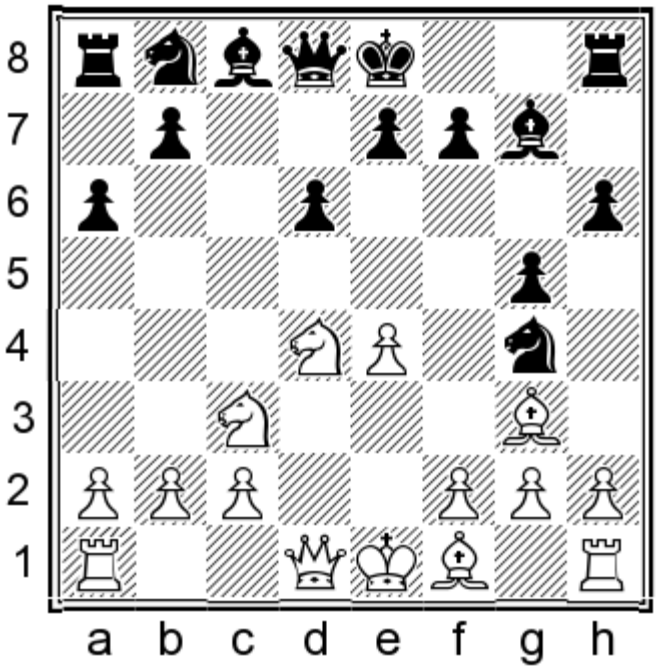
6...♘g4

Kasparov’s favorite move. 6...e6 and; 6...e5 are the other main lines.

7.♗g5

Players who want to destroy chess head for the quick repetition with 7.♗c1 ♘f6 8.♗e3 but, of course, Kamsky does not belong to them even when in lousy form.

7...h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.♗g3 ♗g7



We have reached the starting position of the 6.♗e3 ♘g4 line. White has several options here and Kamsky goes for one

of the main ones.

10.h3

10.♗e2 is the main alternative for White.

10...♘f6

This is the latest development in theory. The main line used to continue with 10...♘e5, but it seems like White might hope for an advantage after 11.f3 ♘bc6 12.♗f2 followed by ♕d2 and 0-0-0.

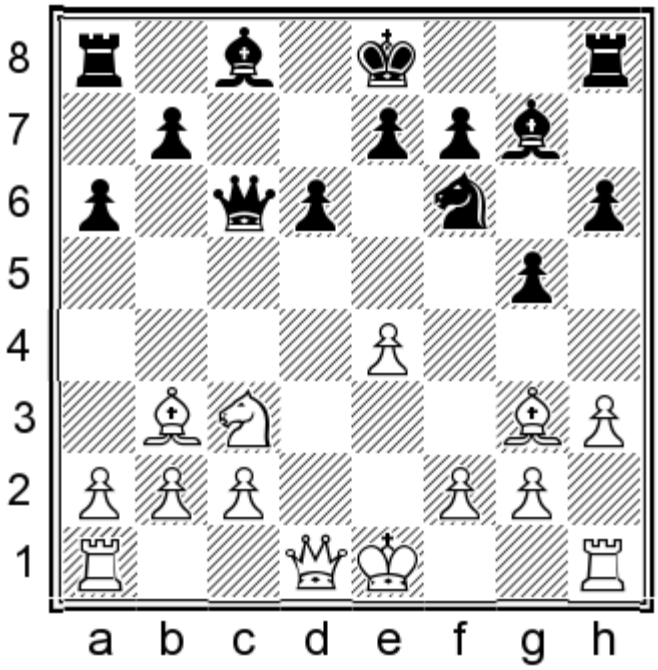
11.♗c4 ♕b6

A standard move in this line. Black prepares ♘c6, which would have been premature if played immediately. Black should refrain from winning a pawn with 11...b5 12.♗b3 b4 when White gets more than enough compensation after 13.♘a4 ♘xe4 14.♕f3! d5 15.0-0-0± with a strong attack because Black is completely undeveloped. 11...♘c6 is strongly met by 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.e5!

12.♗b3 ♘c6

The tactical trick 12...♘xe4 would have been a mistake again: 13.♘xe4 ♕xd4 14.♕e2 threatening ♘xd6. 14...0-0 15.c3 ♕b6 16.h4 g4 17.♗f4↑ with very good attacking potential for White. He might attack the h6 pawn by playing ♕d2 or transfer the knight to h5 via g3.

13.♘xc6 ♕xc6



14.0-0!

This is the novelty — a strong one and probably prepared. 14.♕e2 occurred previously, but after the strong 14...♘d7! 15.♕f3 ♗xc3+ 16.bxc3 ♘f6 Black was alright.

14...g4

14...♘d7 is now met by 15.♕h5 0-0 16.♘d5+– Black cannot protect the e7 pawn, since ♖e8 would leave the f7 unprotected. 14...♘xe4?? drops a piece because of 15.♗d5+– and after 15...♘xc3 the queen is hanging with check.

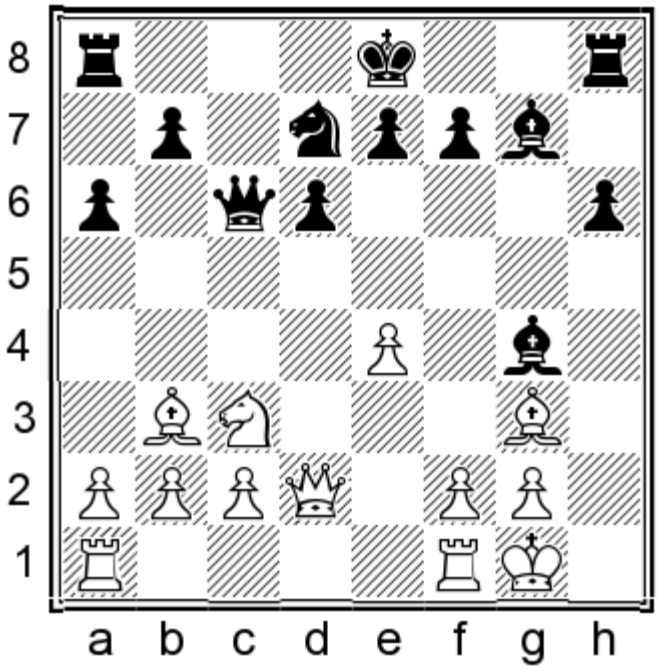
15.hxg4

On 15.h4 then 15...♘h5 was probably Nakamura's plan. 16.♗h2 ♗xc3 17.bxc3 ♖g8 With a double-edged position. Black wants to play ♕c5, and g3 is always hanging in the air.

15...♗xg4

15...♘xg4 is met similarly to the game: 16.♘d5! ♗xb2? loses huge material: 17.♖b1 ♗g7 18.♘b6!+– This pretty move creates fatal threats with ♘xa8 and ♗a4, and the knight cannot be taken because of the discovered check by the bishop.

16.♕d2 ♘d7



As usual the e4 pawn is poisoned: 16...♘xe4? 17.♘xe4 ♕xe4 18.♖ae1 White takes on d6 next, while 18...♕d4 loses a bishop after 19.♕xd4 ♗xd4 20.♖e4!+–

17.♘d5!

Very strong intuition from Kamsky. White activates all his pieces at the cost of a pawn.

17...♗xb2 18.♖ab1 ♗e5!

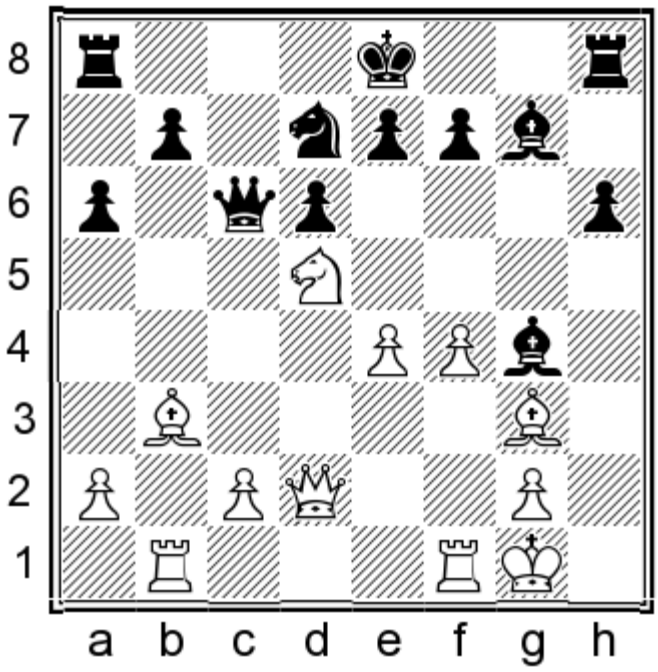
The only move. 18...♗g7 would have been refuted by 19.e5!! ♗xe5 (*19...♘xe5 20.♘b6!+–; 19...dxe5 20.♕b4+–* and wins because of the double-attack on g4 and e7.) 20.♗xe5 dxe5 (*20...♘xe5 21.♘b6!+–* with ♗a4 and ♘xa8 ideas.) 21.♕b4+–

19.f4!?

Now, and on the next turn, Kamsky plays the most tempting human moves. He tries to open the center to the e8 king, which is stuck there for a while since castling either side would run into ♘xe7, checking the queen. Objectively it

seems better to play 19.♗xe5! dxe5 (*19...♘xe5?* loses to the usual motif: *20.♘b6!*) 20.♕b4 ♘c5! The only move in order to protect e7 and now White has a great queen transfer: 21.♕c3! f6 22.♕g3! h5 23.f3± invading with the queen on the g-file. Black is in trouble.

19...♗g7



20.e5!

There was no way back after playing f4, and White does not need to calculate in such moments, just play attacking moves by 'feel'.

20...♘c5

Nakamura remains calm and defends well! His plan is to trade one of the attacking bishops by playing ♘xb3 or ♘e4-g3. Opening the position with 20...dxe5 cannot lead to anything good for Black... 21.fxe5 White has serious threats on the f7 square. 21...♗e6 is the only move, but White has a strong attack after 22.♖bd1 (*22.♗h4* is also good. *22...♘c5* transposes to the game.)

21.♗h4!

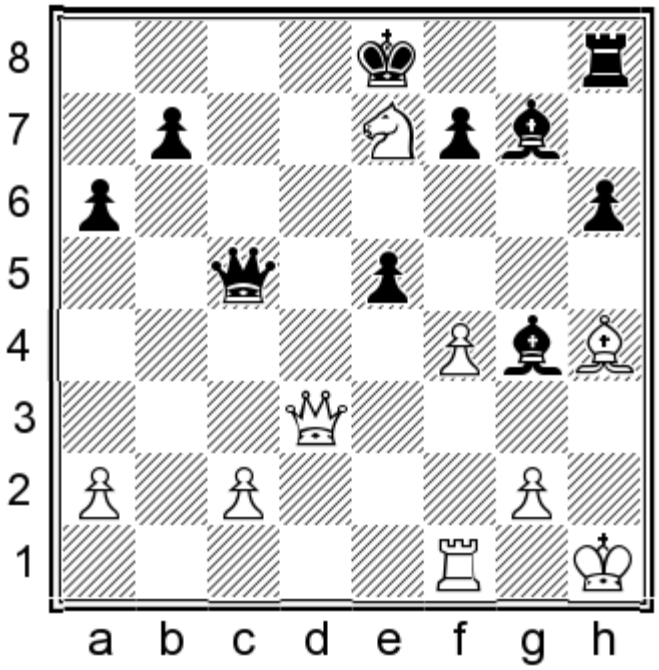
Black's position is getting more-and-more 'suspicious'. Most players would collapse in a few moves, but Nakamura is a very resourceful player, who thrives in such complicated positions.

21...dxe5

21...e6 was objectively the right move! 22.♘e3! A strange position where the computer believes that both players are forced to repeat moves *with* 22...♘e4 23.♕d3 ♘c5 24.♕d2=. (*22.♘f6+?* runs into *22...♗xf6 23.♗xf6 ♘e4!* getting rid of the bishop.) Of course, in a human game, we would not be surprised if one of the players avoided the repetition and then all three results would have been possible.

22.fxe5

Kamsky again plays the most human move. The machine once more thinks differently: 22.♘xe7! was objectively better. 22...♘xb3 23.♖xb3 ♕c5+ 24.♔h1 ♖d8 25.♖d3 ♖xd3 26.♕xd3

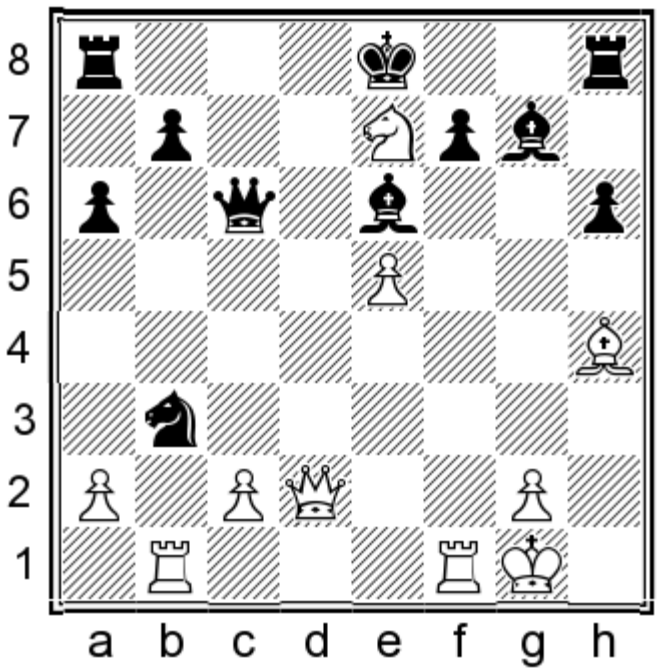


Black does not manage to solve the problem of his king and the attack will become decisive soon. For instance after 26...♕d4 27.♕g3! h5 28.♘f5! ♗xf5 29.♕xg7 ♖f8 30.♕f6+– finishes the game.

22...♗e6!

Black covers the f7 square and remains poised to trade some attacking pieces. He still owns his extra pawn, which was taken on b2.

23.♘xe7 ♘xb3



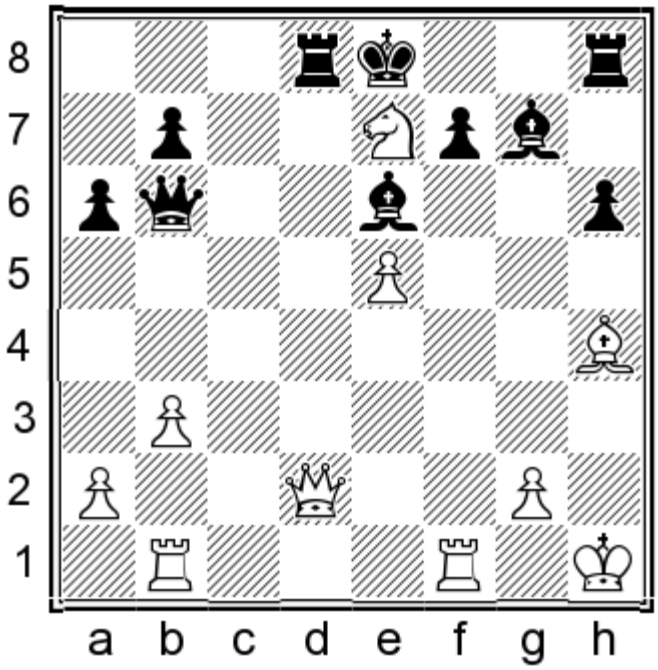
24.cxb3!

This move goes against ‘principles’, which state we should take towards the center. However, in such cases we must think about the position directly — and then we realize that White has a lot of attacking potential with his rook on the c-file later on.

24...♕b6+

The most obvious move, but a mistake. 24...♕c5+ was the right move, but who would put the queen into the firing line of a ♖c1 tempo gain? 25.♔h1 ♖d8! It looks like Black survives here, but let’s check some lines: 26.♕e1 (26.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 27.♘f5+ ♔d7 (*27...♔c8 28.♖bc1*) 28.♖bd1+ ♔c6 29.♘d4+ leads to a forced repetition: 29...♔d7 (*29...♔b6?* If Black tries to win, he loses after *30.♗f2+–*) 30.♘f5) 26...♖d4! This is the key resource of the defence: Black threatens to take on h4 and then on e7. 27.♗f6 ♗xf6 28.exf6 and here comes the difference between 24...♕b6 and ♕c5. Black now gets counterplay with 28...♕h5+! 29.♔g1 ♖h4! and the white king is equally as weak as the black one. The game should end in a draw here as well. 30.♕g3 ♖h1+ 31.♔f2 ♕c5+ 32.♕e3=

25.♔h1 ♖d8



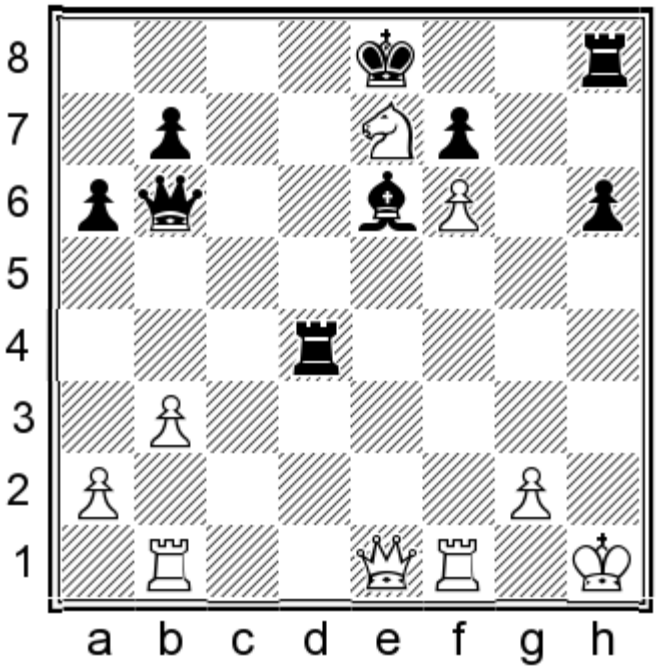
26.♕e1!

It is very important to control and protect the h4 square. 26.♕e2 is met by 26...♖d4! and Black is fine!

26...♖d4

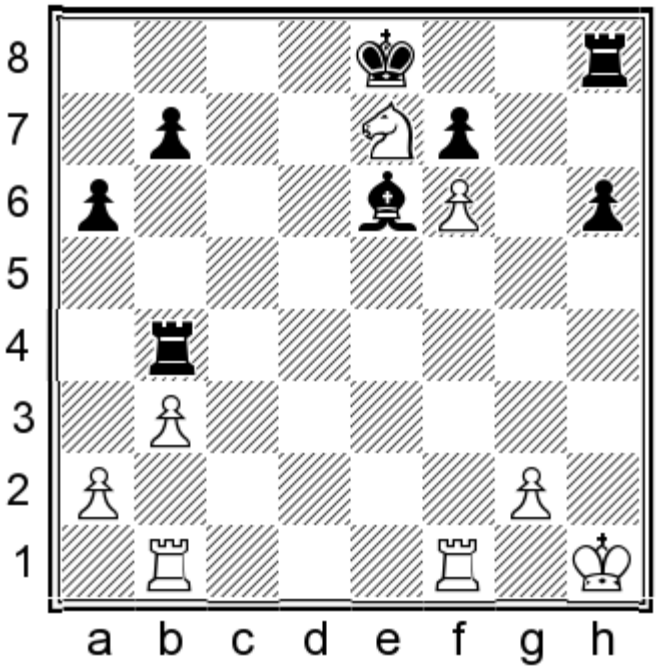
Black would like to trade queens by playing ♕b4, which would solve his problems.

27.♗f6! ♗xf6 28.exf6



28...♔d7!

Great defence by Nakamura! He tries to find shelter for his king in the middle of the board. The main idea of the move is to bring the h8 rook to the battle. 28...♕b4 loses nicely to 29.♕xb4 ♖xb4



30.♖bd1!+– and Black is helpless against the simple threat of ♖d6, ♖fd1 and ♖d8 mate. If Black avoids it by playing ♖b6, then White doubles his rooks with ♖d4... The knight on e7 simply traps the king.

29.♖d1?

A very logical move to trade the defender of the d-file, but somehow it spoils the advantage. Only computers can play perfectly in such positions. 29.♖c1! was the right decision. 29...♕d6! (29...♖d8 now loses to 30.♘f5!! ♖d5 (*30...♗xf5*

31.♕*e7#*) 31.♕e4! and Black has no good defence against ♖fd1. All his pieces are paralyzed. 31...♕b5 32.♖fd1+–) 30.♕f2 ♖d8 is the most tenacious for Black, although White continues pressing after 31.♘f5 ♗xf5 32.♕xf5+ ♕e6 33.♕h5± The game is very far from over, but it is definitely much easier to play as White, since a single mistake from Black might lead to a quick mate with a king on d7...

29...♖d8 30.♕g3

30.♕e5 ♔e8 Black holds.

30...♔e8

At this moment Kamsky decided to finish the game by repetition. It is difficult to suggest something better.

31.♕g8+

It might have been a clever idea to try 31.♘f5 ♗xf5! (*31...*♖*xd1?? 32.*♕*g8+* ♔*d7 33.*♖*xd1+* ♔*c8 34.*♘*e7++–*) 32.♖xd4 ♕xd4! the only move! (*32...*♖*xd4* loses to *33.*♕*g8+* ♔*d7 34.*♕*xf7+* ♔*c8 35.*♕*e8+* ♖*d8 36.*♖*c1+* ♔*b8 37.*♕*e5+* ♔*a7 38.*♕*xf5+–*) 33.♖xf5 ♔d7! Another only move for Black against the threatened ♕g8-♕f7, but now Black holds the draw. White does not have enough pieces to punish the walking king.

31...♔d7 32.♕g3 ♔e8 33.♕g8+ ♔d7 34.♕g3

A good fighting draw!

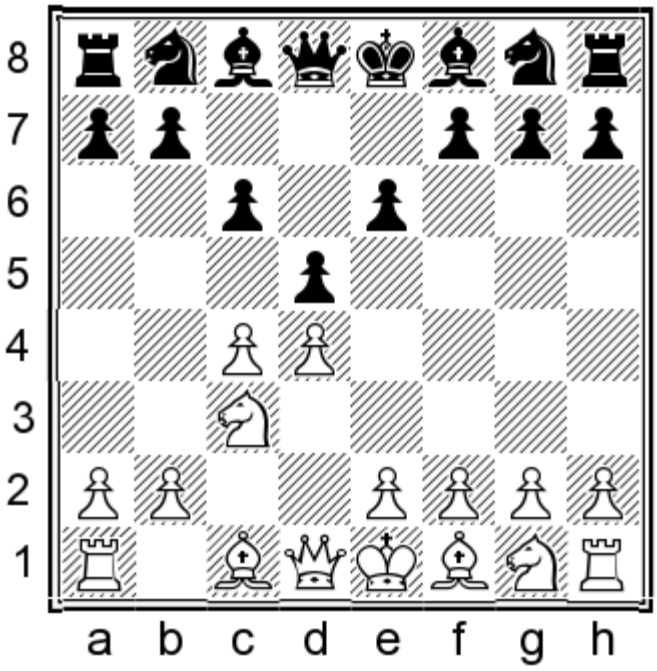
1/2

GAME 23
H. Nakamura (2772)
E. Tomashevsky (2703)
FIDE GP Paris Paris FRA (1)
22.09.2013, [D31]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

The last Grand Prix in Paris started with a really spectacular game.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6

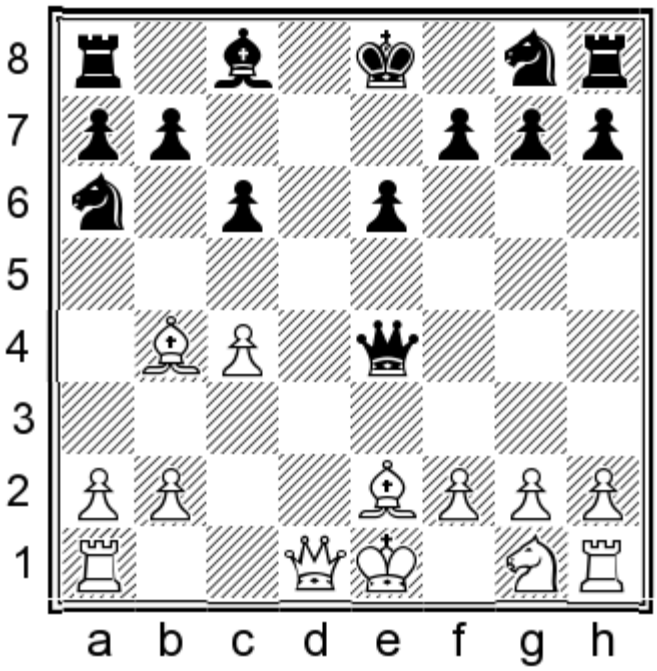
This opening decision by Black might have caught Nakamura by surprise. I cannot recall whether Tomashevsky has ever employed this opening before.



4.e4

Nakamura plays the most challenging move, involving a pawn sacrifice for strong compensation. From a practical point of view this is a clever idea, because Tomashevsky is known to be a great positional player who feels less comfortable in sharp position. However, this game shows his strength in this kind of confrontation as well.

4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 6.♗d2 ♕xd4 7.♗xb4 ♕xe4+ 8.♗e2 ♘a6



We have reached the initial position of this opening. The b4 bishop is under attack and all of its moves belong to theory, including the highly attractive 9.♗f8 (attacking the g7 pawn) where it cannot be taken because of the mate on d8.

9.♗c3 f6

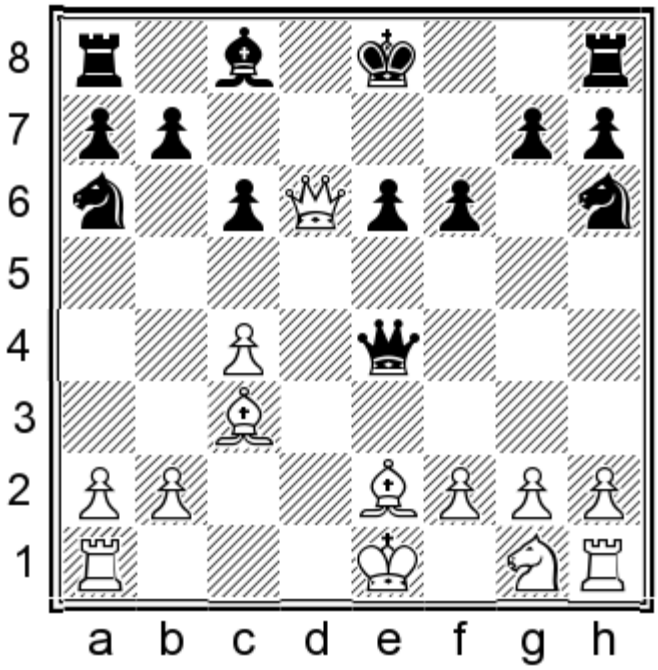
9...♘e7 is the most common move, but this line is still full of unexplored territories.

10.♕d6

A rare move again, this time by White. 10.♘f3 has mostly been played before.

10...♘h6

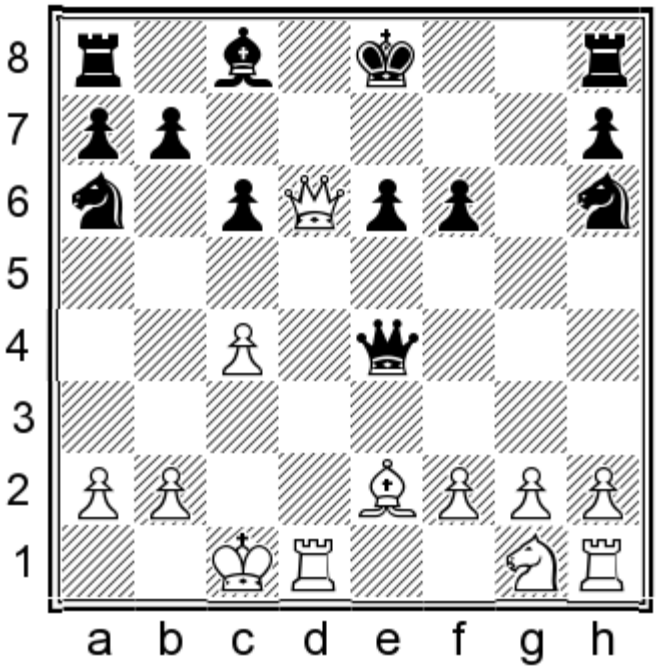
With the idea of playing ♘f7 and kicking out the annoying queen from d6.



11.♗xf6!

A brilliant move, but it is still not a novelty, so both players must have checked it in their preparation. After the direct 11.0-0-0 ♘f7 covers the d8 square 12.♗h5 g6 and Black is safe!

11...gxf6 12.0-0-0



12...♕g6!

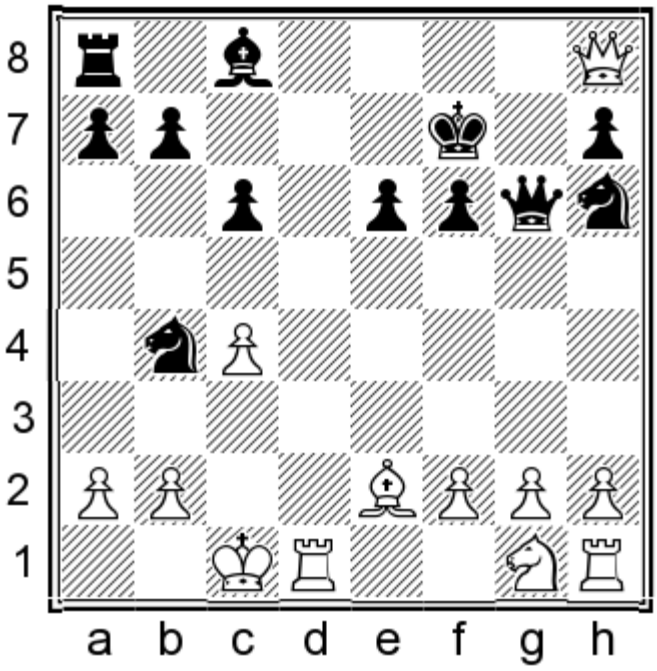
The novelty appears, and is actually the only move for Black to stay in the game! Black prevents ♗h5. In a previous game Black played 12...♖g8 and lost after 13.♗h5+ ♖g6 14.♕d8+ ♔f7 15.♕h8!+– Llanos-Adla, Villa Gesell 1996. White takes on h7 and wins huge material. The difference is that after 12...♘f7 13.♗h5! Black does not have g6 and he is helpless against the mate on d8.

13.♕d8+ ♔f7 14.♕xh8

White has won an exchange, but suddenly Black becomes the attacking side!

14...♘b4!

Creating the threat of ♕c2 mate.



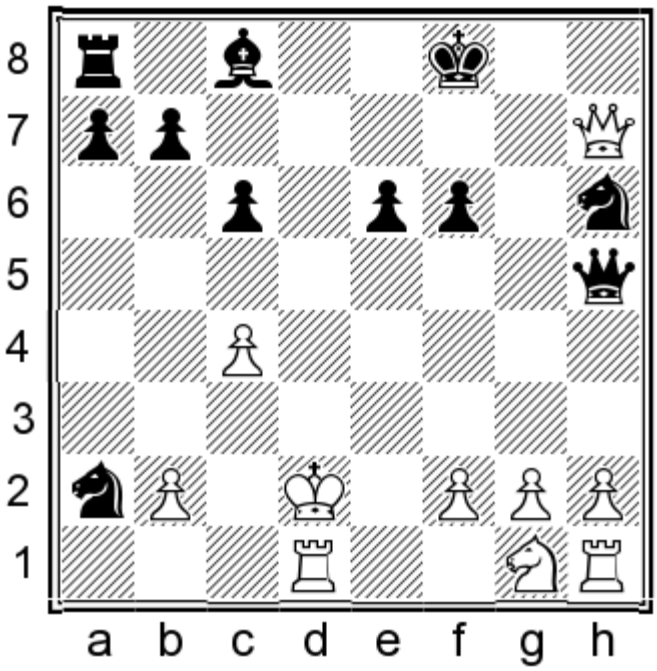
15.♗h5!

It was Nakamura's turn to find the only move! 15.♖d2?? leads to mate-in-two after 15...♘xa2+ 16.♔d1 ♕b1#; 15.♔d2? is met by the fantastic 15...♔e7!!–+ and White cannot avoid his queen being trapped after ♘f7!

15...♘xa2+!

An important intermediate move with the idea to close down the d-file. 15...♕xh5? loses to 16.♕xh7+ ♔e8 17.♕h8+ ♔f7 18.♖d8!+–

16.♔d2 ♕xh5 17.♕xh7+ ♔f8 18.♕h8+ ♔f7 19.♕h7+ ♔f8



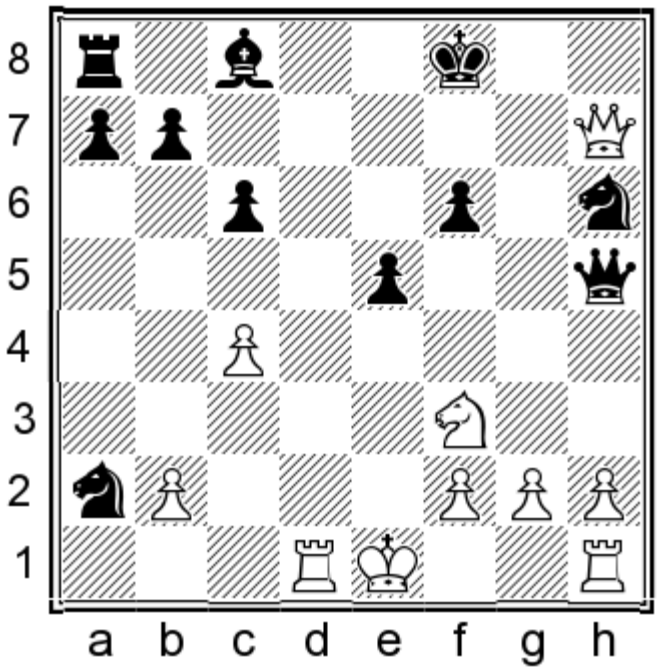
Black is slightly ahead materially with his two minor pieces against the rook, but his king's position is quite unstable. White might hope for more than a perpetual check, so Nakamura stays true to his style and continues the game!

20.♘f3!? e5!

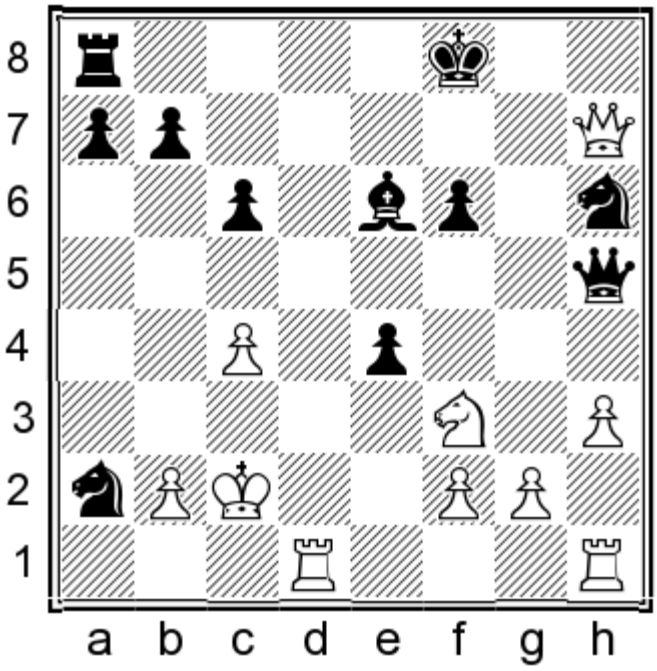
Black wishes to complete the development of his queenside pieces and he opens the diagonal for his bishop.

21.♔e1

The human move, opening the rook's file.



21.h3!? This engine suggestion has two ideas. The main one is the direct threat of g4, whereupon the queen cannot protect the knight on h6. The other one is simple prophylaxis against ♗g4, the only possible development of the c8 bishop (since ♗f5 could be met by ♕h8 and ♕xa8) while after ♗g4-♕h8 Black has ♘g8 and the queen is protected on h5. Black has to defend precisely to stay in the game! 21...e4! with the idea of having ♕a5 check after g4, 22.♔c2 White has refreshed the threat of playing g4 and added a new one with ♖d8! 22...♗e6!



We have reached a very interesting position, which is rich in possibilities. 23.g4

a) 23.♖d6 ♘b4+ 24.♔b1 (*24.♔b3? ♗xc4+! 25.♔xc4 ♕b5+ 26.♔c3 ♕c5+ 27.♔b3 ♕xd6*) 24...♗f7 25.♖xf6 exf3 26.♖xh6 ♕e5 27.♕h8+ ♕xh8 28.♖xh8+ ♗g8 Only Black could be better here.;

b) 23.♘d4 is risky for White in view of 23...♗xc4 24.♕h8+ ♔f7 25.♕xa8 ♘b4+ 26.♔b1 ♕a5;

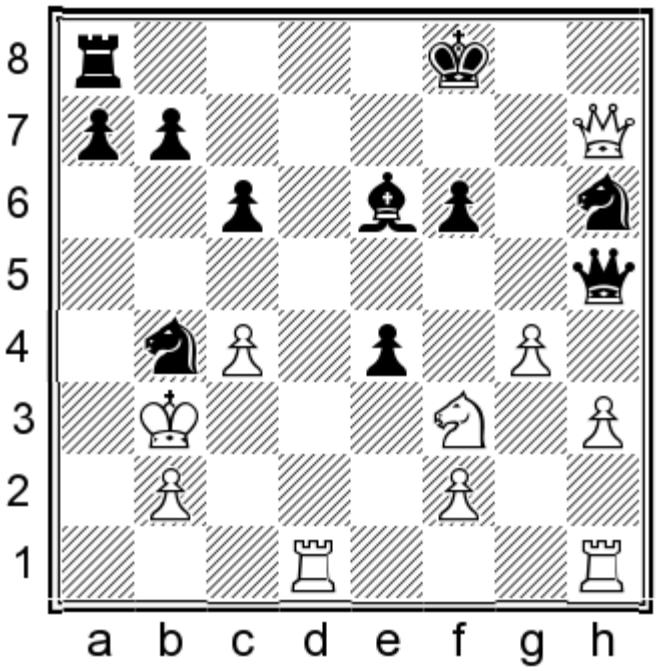
c) 23.♕h8+ ♔f7 24.♕xa8 exf3 25.♕xb7+ ♔g6 This position is fine for Black. The roles have been reversed again and he is the one attacking!;

23...♘b4+

(The problem with *23...exf3* is that after *24.gxh5 ♗f5+ 25.♕xf5 ♘xf5 26.♔b3!*+– the knight is trapped.)

24.♔c1! White can play for the win!

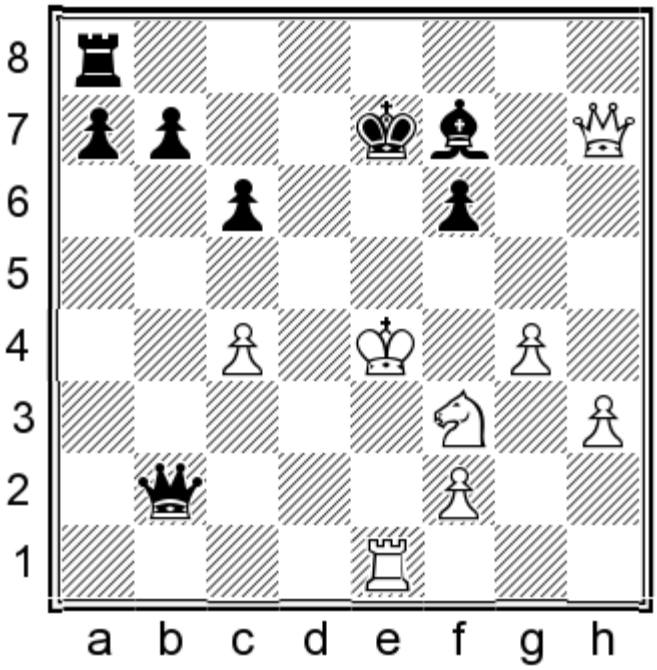
(*24.♔b1 exf3!* already works: *25.gxh5 ♗f5+ 26.♕xf5 ♘xf5; 24.♔b3* leads to a spectacular draw after



24...♗xc4+! 25.♔xc4 ♕b5+ 26.♔c3 ♘a2+ 27.♔c2 ♕c4+ 28.♔b1 ♘c3+! 29.bxc3 ♕b3+ with perpetual check.)

24...♕c5

(*24...♕a5 25.♕xh6+ ♔e7 26.♕h7+ ♗f7* The machine is not impressed and shows the win after *27.♖he1! ♕a1+ 28.♔d2 ♕xb2+ 29.♔e3 ♘c2+ 30.♔xe4 ♘xe1 31.♖xe1+–*



And it is actually the black king who is in danger!)

25.♕xh6+ ♔f7 26.♕h7+ ♔f8 27.♕xe4 ♗d5

(On *27...♗xc4 28.♕d4!* defends perfectly!)

28.♕d4 ♕xd4 29.♘xd4 ♗xh1 30.♖xh1 ♘d3+

(*30...♔f7* is probably better and ♖d8 comes next move. It is difficult to assess whether White is winning or if Black's drawing chances are better.)

31.♔c2 ♘xf2 32.♖f1 ♘e4

(*32...♘xh3?* loses to *33.♖h1!*)

33.♖f4 ♖e8 34.b4! followed by ♔d3 having prevented the ...♘c5 check. White retains an advantage! This leads to a very interesting question from a theoretical point of view. This position, or the one after 30...♔f7, might arise by force after 11.♗xf6 and in both cases White is doing better. We are curious to see how this line will develop in the near future.

21...♗g4! 22.h3

Trying to get rid of the queen's defender and also to open the g-file for the rook. However, due to the pin, White is not threating to play hxg4 so Black has a free move. 22.♕h8+ could be met by 22...♘g8!

22...e4 23.♘d4

23.♕h8+ was an alternative, although in the endgame after 23...♘g8 24.hxg4 ♕xh8 25.♖xh8 exf3 26.gxf3 ♖e8+ 27.♔f1 ♔g7 Black is not worse.

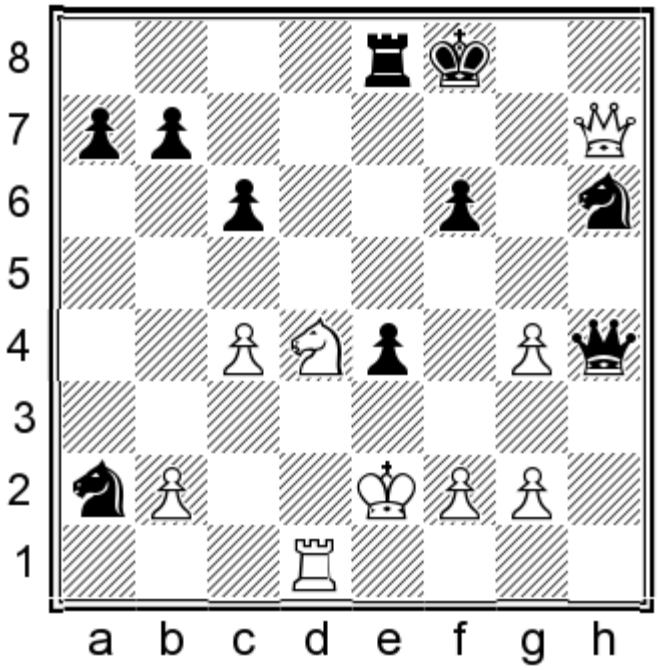
23...♖e8!

Activating the final piece and also covering the e6 square in order to threaten ♗xd1. Nakamura was down to 1 minute at this point! 23...♗xd1?? did not work because of 24.♘e6+ ♔e8 25.♘g7+ ♔f8 26.♘xh5+–

24.♕h8+

24.hxg4 also leads to a drawish position after 24...♕xh1+ 25.♔e2 ♘c1+!

(But not *25...♕h4?* because of



26.♘e6+! ♖xe6 27.♖d8+ ♖e8 28.♕h8++–)

26.♔d2 ♕h2 27.♔xc1 ♘xg4 28.♕f5 ♕h6+ 29.♔c2 ♘e5 Black consolidates his position and should not be worse.

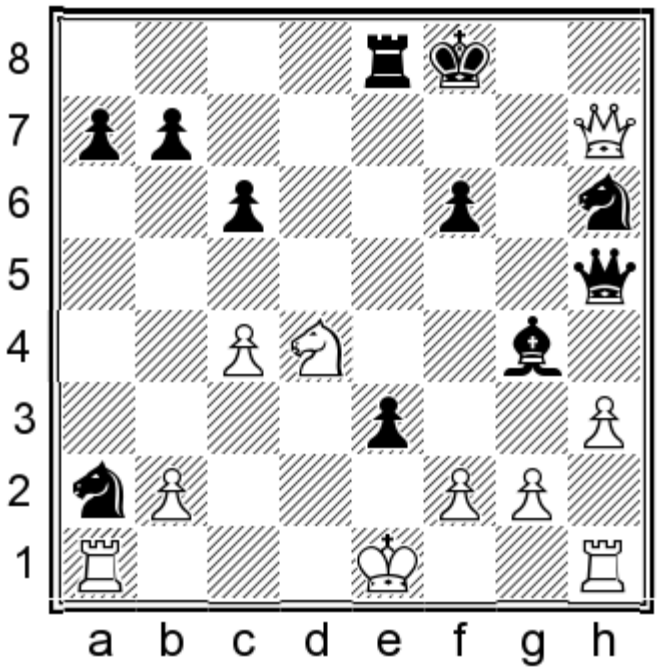
24...♔f7

24...♘g8? now loses to 25.hxg4+–

25.♕h7+ ♔f8 26.♖a1

Wow! I wonder how many players would have chosen not to repeat moves with 1 minute on the clock!

26...e3



Black’s counterplay is coming too fast and White is forced to give perpetual check now. He could have continued playing for the win with 0-0, but unfortunately for him this is an illegal move as he has already castled queenside in this game!

27.♕h8+ ♔f7 28.♕h7+ ♔f8 29.♕h8+ ♔f7 30.♕h7+

A great game! As we have seen, there can be a big difference between a draw and a draw!

1/2

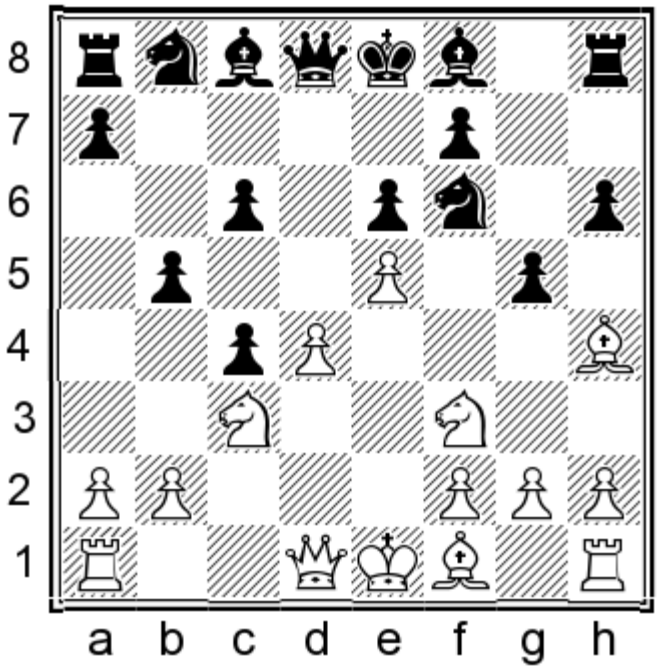
GAME 24
V. Kramnik (2793)
L. Aronian (2801)
World Teams 2013 Antalya TUR (1)
26.11.2013, [D44]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

It is always nice to watch the World Nr.2 against the Nr.3, especially when they play such an exciting game.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 c6 5.♗g5 dxc4

The Botvinnik Variation of the Slav defence is a guarantee of a very interesting fight!

6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♗h4 g5



9.♘xg5 hxg5 10.♗xg5

This is of course just the beginning of theory in this line. Thousands of games have been played here so far according to the database. It is very interesting to follow the battle of probably the two best-prepared players of our time in such a sharp line.

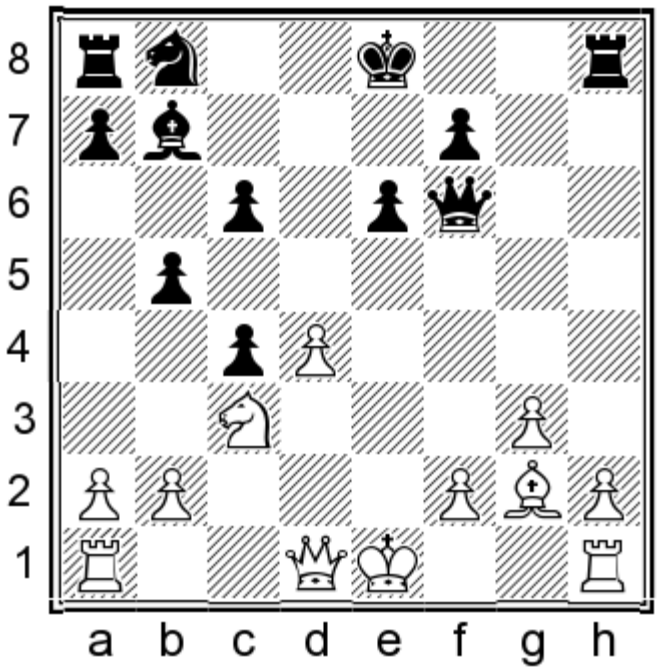
10...♗e7!?

This is the first surprise. 10...♘bd7 is by far the most common move, but of course the text is also a well-analyzed one.

11.exf6 ♗xf6 12.♗xf6 ♕xf6 13.g3

White had alternatives here, but Kramnik follows the main line.

13...♗b7 14.♗g2



14...♘a6

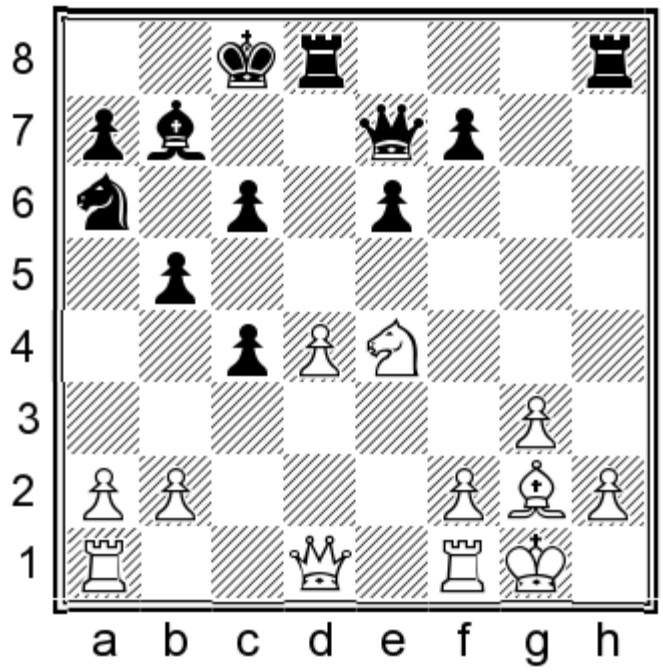
It is clear that both players were still just at the beginning of their preparation. There are still hundreds of games in the database and here theory considers 3 main moves.

15.♘e4

The most common move again. 15.♘xb5 seems to lead to a draw after 15...0-0-0! 16.♕a4 cxb5 17.♗xb7+ ♔xb7 18.♕xb5+ ♔a8 and White is forced to give perpetual check. 19.♕c6+ (*19.♕xa6?* loses to *19...♕f3!* and White gets mated. 0-0 runs into ♖xh2 and mate in a few moves.) 19...♔b8 20.♕b5+ ♔a8 21.♕c6;

15.a4 is the third option.

15...♕e7 16.0-0 0-0-0



Here comes the novelty!

17.h4!?

As we will see, White wants to attack with a4, but in that case Black gets strong counterplay with f5. The point of the novelty is to gain the g5 square for the knight. It is clear that Aronian's camp has also analyzed this idea. 17.a4 happened in all the previous games, when Black replies with 17...f5 18.axb5 (*18.♘c3!?* was considered to be the critical line before this game. It is clear that both players know something here. *18...b4 19.♘e2 c5 20.♕c2*) 18...cxb5 19.♖xa6 ♗xa6 20.♘c5 ♕xc5 21.dxc5 ♖xd1 22.♖xd1 b4 is given as a draw after a few more moves.

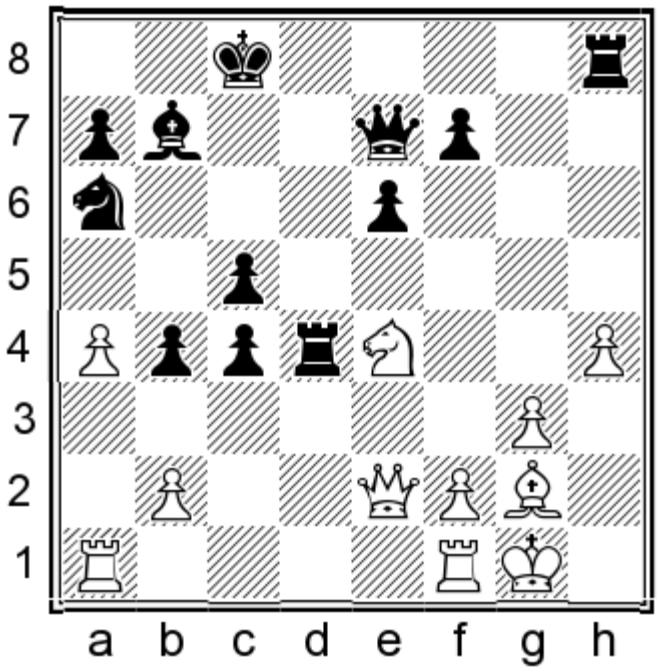
17...c5!

Black needs to act quickly, otherwise his king becomes much more vulnerable after a4!

18.a4!

The standard attack. White wants to open the a-file, which is why Black is forced to push b4, but then the c4 pawn becomes a target.

18...♖xd4 19.♕e2 b4



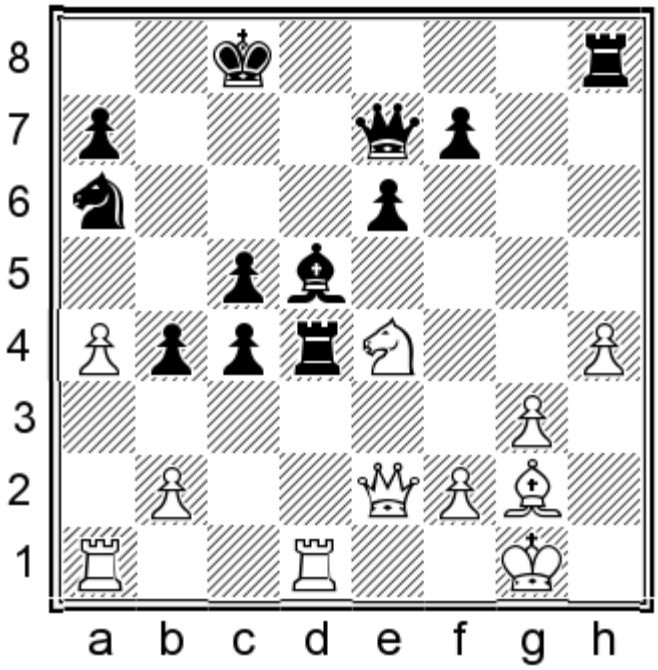
The following couple of moves are all connected to the c4 pawn.

20.♖fd1

White tries to remove the defender of the c4 pawn.

20...♗d5

Black stabilizes.



21.♖ac1!

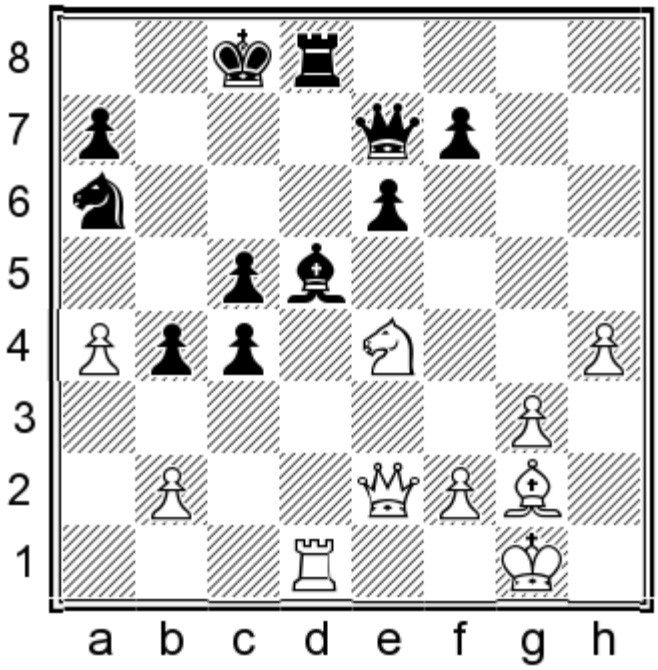
Showing a clear intention to sacrifice an exchange. After taking on c4, Black loses his strong bishop on d5 and

suddenly the queen combined with the two very active minor pieces create serious threats against the naked black king.

21...♖xd1+!

Black lures the rook away from the c4 square. Some random move, for instance 21...♖d8, would run into 22.♖xd4 cxd4 23.♖xc4+! ♗xc4 24.♕xc4+ ♘c7 25.♘c5 with a huge attack.

22.♖xd1 ♖d8



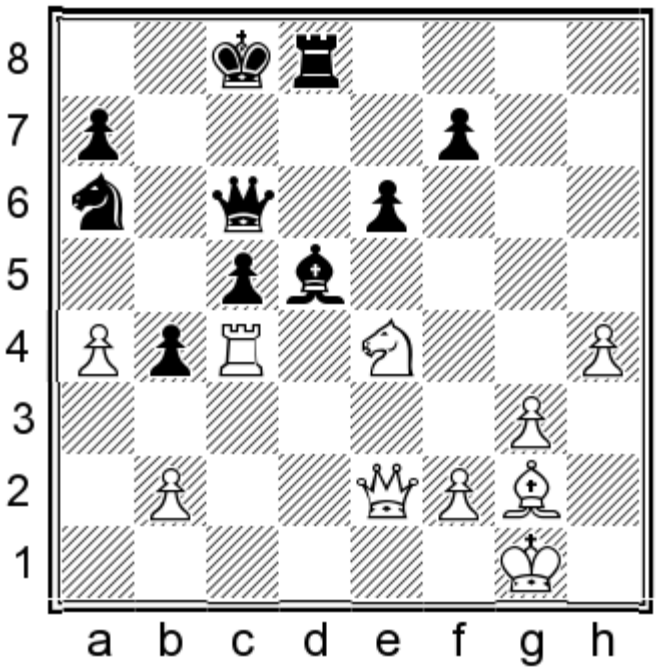
23.♖c1!

Kramnik returns to his strategy! Additionally he wants to play ♘d2, gaining the c4 pawn without a sacrifice.

23...♕b7!?

Aronian is searching for counterplay along the h1–a8 diagonal and he threatens to win a piece with f5. However Kramnik found a very strong answer!

24.♖xc4! ♕c6



How to deal with the f5 threat? 24...♗xc4 loses to 25.♘d6+ the queen is hanging with check. 25...♔b8 26.♕xc4 ♕b6 27.♘xf7+– when Black's position is hopeless.

25.h5!!

Brilliant! Kramnik realizes that f5 is not really a threat, so he advances his passed pawn. 25.♖c1 is bad because of 25...f5 26.♘xc5 ♘xc5.

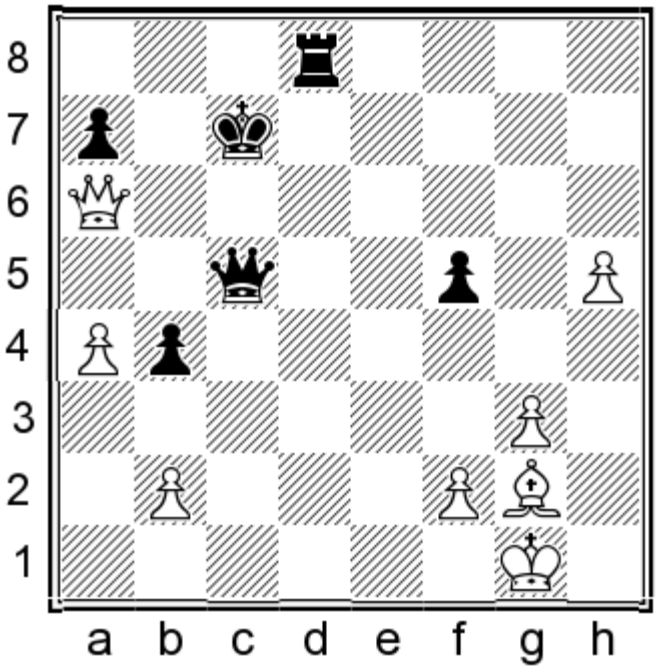
25...f5 26.♘xc5! ♗xc4

with the point that 26...♘xc5? runs into 27.♕c2! and White wins!

27.♕xc4 ♕xc5 28.♕xe6+!

White takes another pawn before capturing the knight, otherwise Black could have protected it with ♔d7.

28...♔c7 29.♕xa6



White is slightly better materially with two pawns and a bishop against the rook, and the h-pawn is also very powerful. The question is whether Black is able to organize counterplay against the white king or not?

29...♖d1+

On 29...♖d2 Kramnik intended to play 30.♕b7+ ♔d6 31.♕b8+ ♔d7 32.♕f4 when White consolidates and the b2 pawn cannot be taken because of 32...♖xb2 33.h6+–

30.♔h2 f4

It appears that 30...♕xf2! was stronger, when 31.h6! f4! seems to save Black. White has nothing better than perpetual check.

31.♕b7+

White might have tried 31.♕e2!? fxg3+ 32.fxg3 ♖d7 33.♗f3 keeping the initiative, but of course it will be very difficult to convert the advantage.

31...♔d8 32.♕a8+ ♔e7 33.♕e4+ ♔d8 34.♕a8+

Getting closer to the first time-control.

34...♔e7 35.♕e4+ ♔d8 36.♕xf4

A good practical decision to keep the pawn shield around the white king. A nice line is 36.♕f3 ♖d2 37.h6 ♖xf2 38.h7 and White seems to win, but... 38...fxg3+ 39.♕xg3 ♖xg2+! 40.♕xg2 ♕c7+ 41.♔g1 the pawn cannot be taken because of ♕a8 and ♕xa7 wins the queen, but after 41...♕c1+ 42.♕f1 ♕g5 Black holds the draw.

36...♕xh5+ 37.♗h3 ♕c5!

Black consolidates. The only way to make progress would be to advance the pawns, but that is risky because it opens the king's position.

38.a5 ♖d5

38...♕xa5 was also possible and White probably doesn't have anything better than perpetual, but Aronian did not want remove his queen from her active position.

39.♕f6+ ♔e8 40.♕e6+ ♔f8 41.♕f6+ ♔e8

Time- trouble is over and Kramnik continues pushing.

42.♗g4 ♕d4

Black would happily trade the queens because the kingside pawns are not far -enough advanced, therefore he has enough time to catch the b2 or the a5 pawn.

43.♕e6+ ♔f8 44.♕h6+ ♔e7 45.♕e6+ ♔f8 46.♔g2 ♖d6 47.♕c8+ ♔g7 48.♕c7+ ♔f8 49.♕c8+ ♔g7

A great fighting draw!

1/2

GAME 25
B. Amin (2652)
N. Vitiugov (2741)
World Teams 2013
Antalya TUR (9.1)
05.12.2013, [B40]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We are in the last round of the World Team Championship and Russia only need a draw to become the Champions. Instead of boring-solid play, Vitiugov heads for a game full of action and a nice sacrifice.

1.e4 c5

For many years Vitiugov played the French, but lately has switched to Sicilian Paulsen structures.

2.♘f3 e6 3.d3

Such a side-line is of course not going to give White an opening advantage, but it is clear that White is simply aiming for non-theoretical play.

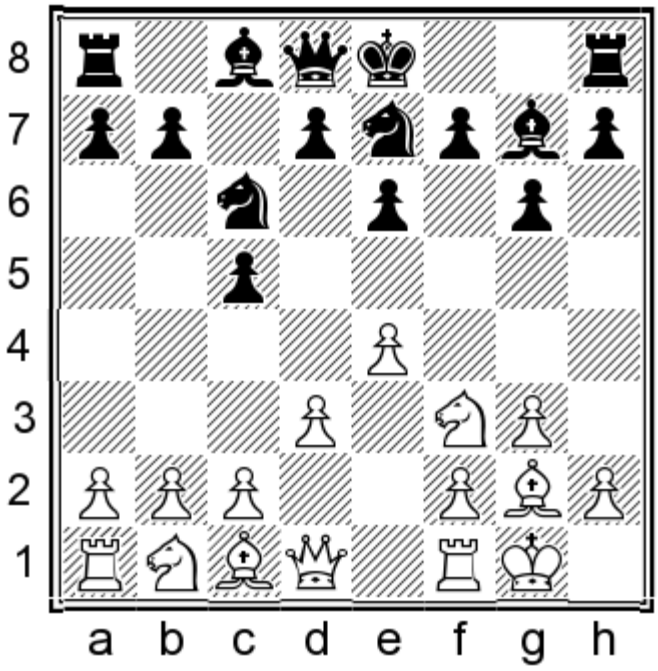
3...♘c6 4.g3 ♘ge7

Black doesn't choose the main set-up. 4...d5 5.♗g2 ♘f6 should be considered the main line, with a huge amount of games being played here.

5.♗g2 g6

It is very important that Black has not played d6, so the ...d5 move is going to be played without loss of tempo.

6.0-0 ♗g7



7.c3!?

A very logical move. White is setting a “rock” against the bishop on g7, and at the same time he wants to play d4 next.

7...0-0

It is hard to understand why Vitiugov allows White the opoortunity to play d4-e5. To play 7...d5 first looks much more logical to me.

8.d4

Of course!

8...cxd4 9.cxd4 d5

Black has to fight for the center, so to play a move like 9...d6 is clearly not an option.

10.e5 f6!?

The position is becoming very sharp. If White is in time to keep his center he should be better, but Black has active light pieces play for it.

11.♖e1

After 11.exf6 ♗xf6 12.♘c3 ♘f5 Black has great play because it is so difficult for White to protect the d4 pawn.

11...♕b6

Black starts his attack against the d4 pawn. What could be more logical?!

12.♘c3 ♘f5

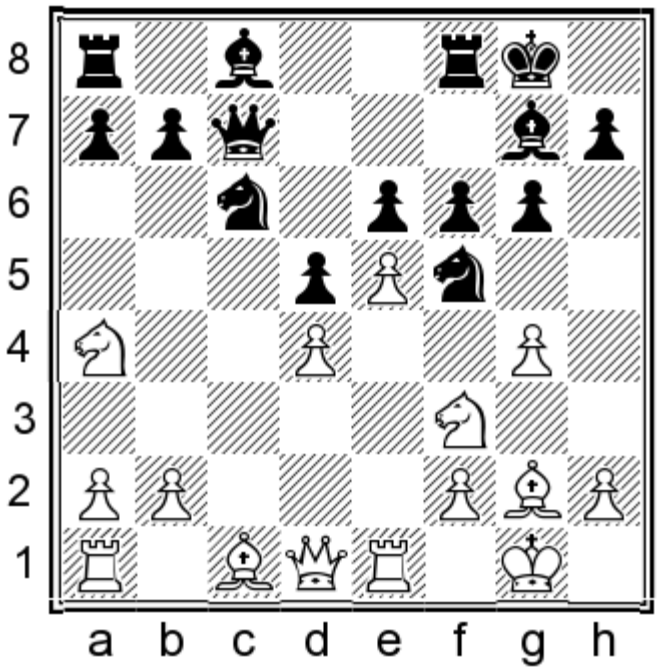
The d4-pawn is hanging.

13.♘a4 ♕c7

And now the e5 pawn is under attack.

14.g4

There is no time for White to play slow moves.



14.♗f4 would not lead to anything good as after 14...g5 15.exf6 gxf4 16.fxg7 ♕xg7 the d4 pawn is going to fall.

14...fxe5!

A nice piece sacrifice. After the more solid 14...♘fe7 15.exf6 ♖xf6 16.♗e3 White's position already looks better. The d4-pawn is protected and the g4-pawn is stopping Black from playing ♘f5 in the future.

15.gxf5

15.dxe5 was of course not possible as after 15...♘h6! the black knight heads to f7 via h6, after which the e5 pawn will be lost.

15...e4 16.fxe6!

A very good decision. There was no hope of keeping the piece as Black would just get too much play for it. 16.♘g5 ♗xd4 and Black seems to be doing better here.

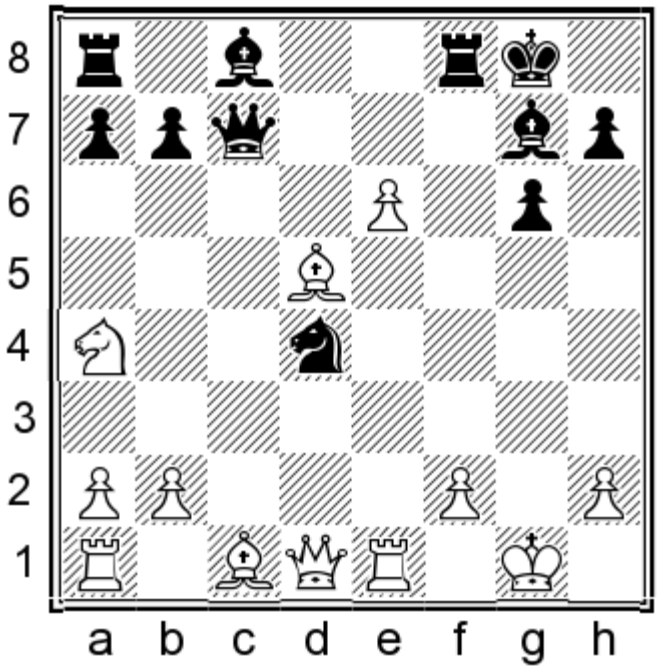
16...exf3 17.♗xf3

We are facing a really strange position which is very hard to evaluate. Black's development is better, but the pawn on e6 is extremely unpleasant as it is preventing the development of the c8-bishop and also the rook on a8. The position remains very sharp.

17...♘xd4

Of course Black is not in time to take the e6 pawn: 17...♕d6 18.♘c3 ♗xe6? 19.♖xe6! ♕xe6 20.♗xd5 and White is winning.

18.♗xd5



18...♖xf2!?

A very interesting decision. The simpler 18...♕e7 19.♘c3 ♗xe6 20.♖e4 ♖ad8 would also give Black good play.

19.e7+ ♗e6

The only move.

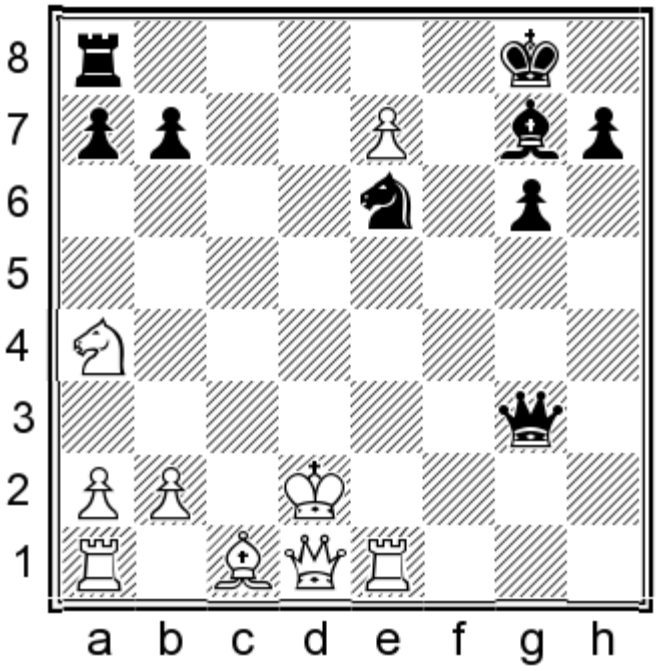
20.♗xe6+ ♘xe6 21.♔xf2

White has to take the rook.

21...♕xh2+ 22.♔e3

What a position! White is a full rook up but his king is on the run.

22...♕g3+ 23.♔d2



23...♕g5+

Black gives the “correct” check. All other checks would give White good winning chances.

24.♔c2

After 24.♖e3 ♗d4 25.♕e2 ♗xe3+ 26.♕xe3 ♕d5+ it seems as though the white king cannot escape the checks either.

24...♕f5+!

Once again Black is playing accurately and White cannot escape the draw.

25.♔d2

Of course not 25.♔b3? ♘d4+ 26.♔a3 ♘c2+ with a win for Black.

25...♕g5+ 26.♔c2 ♕f5+

A beautiful draw after a very interesting fight.

1/2

GAME 26
H. Nakamura (2789)
S. Karjakin (2759)
76th Tata Steel Masters Wijk aan Zee NED (5.2)
17.01.2014, [E37]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We will see a short, but very intense, game. In the opening Nakamura managed to surprise Karjakin but Sergey managed to find some great moves and White would have been in grave danger of losing the game had Black continued playing in the final position!

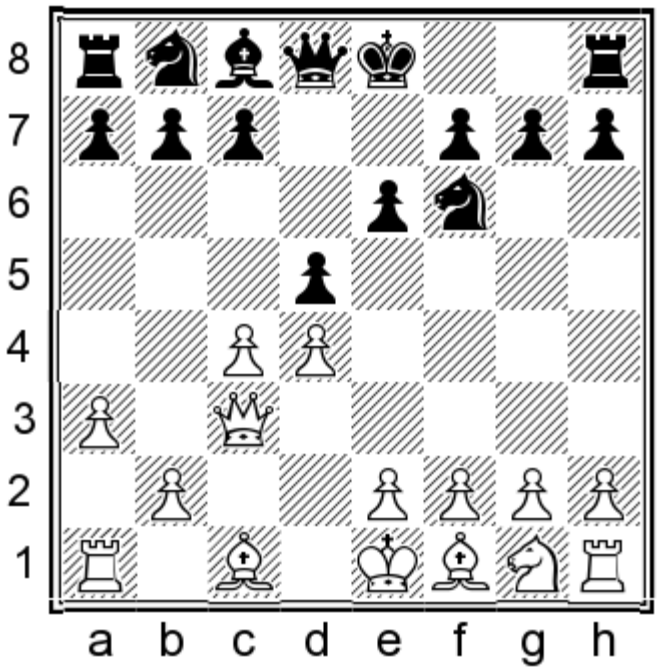
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2

The Nimzo with 4.♕c2 seems to be Nakamura's main weapon.

4...d5

4...0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 d5 7.♗g5 is the other big main-line in which Nakamura recently managed to win a very nice game against Kramnik.

5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3



6...♘e4

This is the difference from 4...0-0. Black tries to act very quickly against White's center.

7.♕c2 c5

White has the advantage of the bishop pair, but Black is a bit better developed, which is why a move like 7...c5 is very logical. Of course, it is just the beginning of theory.

8.dxc5 ♘c6

Black continues the dynamic play.

9.cxd5 exd5 10.e3 0-0 11.♘f3

We are still involved in a long line of theory.

11...♗f5 12.♗d3 ♕a5+

So far both players had been playing very quickly.

13.♔e2!?

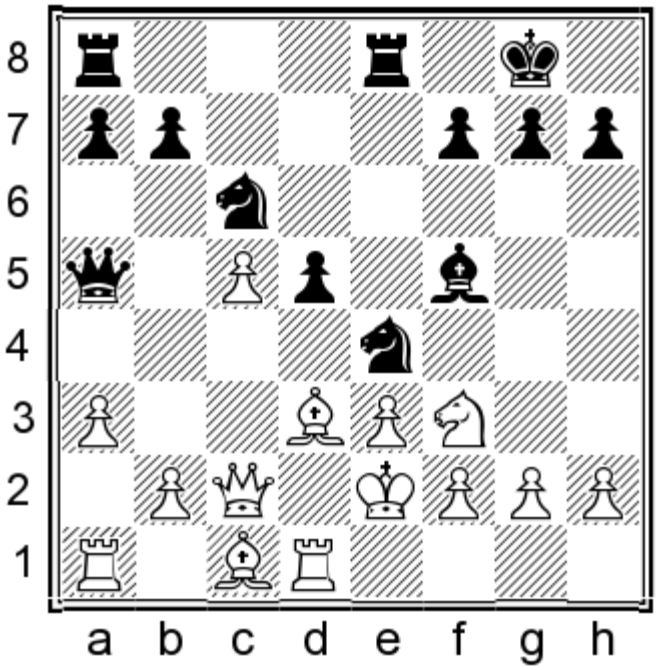
A risky but interesting move, which has never been played before at the top level. After the usual 13.♘d2 ♘xd2 14.♗xd2 ♗xd3 15.♕xd3 ♕xc5 the position is almost equal: Black is in time to play the quick ...d4 next. And after 13.b4 ♘xb4 14.axb4 ♕xa1 15.0-0 ♕f6 16.♗b2 ♕e7 the position is complicated as well, but it seems that Black is not worse here either.

13...♖fe8!

Logical and strong. Black has the d4 move in mind and of course the rook is just very well placed on e8. It would have been a much worse idea to play 13...♘b4?! because now after 14.axb4 ♕xa1 15.♕b3! the black queen is almost caught on a1 and White clearly has more than enough compensation for being an exchange for a pawn down.

14.♖d1

White frees the f1 square for the king.



14...♗g4!

Another great move by Karjakin. Of course it just didn't make any sense to play 14...d4? now because after 15.♔f1

White would be a healthy pawn up.

15.b4

A very risky move. Nakamura is, as usual, fighting for the advantage and 15.b4 is probably the only way to do it, but Black gets a very strong attack now. A calmer way of playing would have been 15.♔f1 ♘e5 Black has many other ways, but this is one of the most logical lines 16.♗e2 ♘xf3 17.♗xf3 (Of course not *17.gxf3? ♗h3+ 18.♔g1 ♖e6* and Black is winning.) 17...♗xf3 18.gxf3 ♕a6+ A tricky check. 19.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 20.♔xe2 ♘xc5 and this endgame should be around equal.

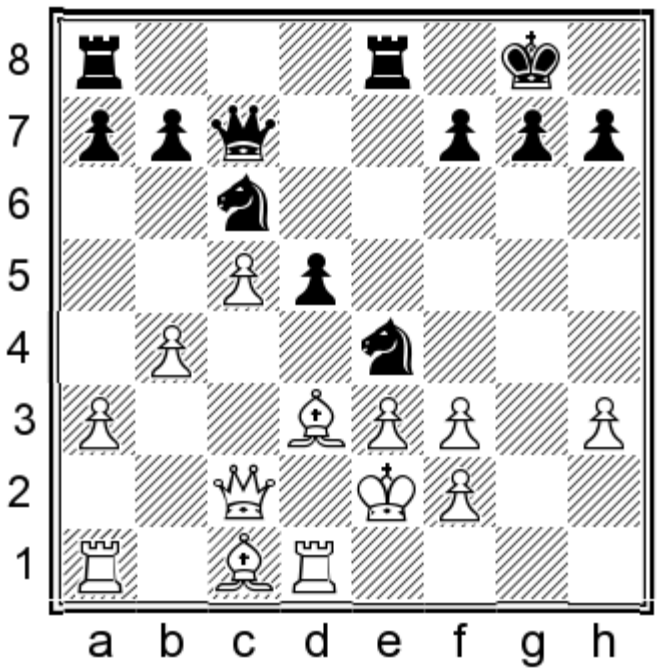
15...♕c7

15...♘xb4? doesn't work, as after 16.axb4 ♕xa1 17.♗b2 ♕a2 18.♖a1 White traps the black queen.

16.h3

White doesn't have anything better. 16.♔f1 was almost losing after 16...♘e5! 17.♗e2 ♘xf3 18.♗xf3 and Black is in time with his mating attack. 18...♕xh2 19.♗xg4 ♕h1+ 20.♔e2 ♕xg2 with a winning position for Black.

16...♗xf3+ 17.gxf3



17...♘g5

Black is threatening to play ...♘d4 next. As we can see, the position is very dynamic; White is a pawn up and if he is in time to develop his pieces the game could simply be over.

18.♗b2

White is now almost fully developed.

18...d4!

Another very good move by Black. The white king comes under heavy attack. 18...♕f4 didn't work because of the pretty 19.♗e4!

19.h4

A very cool move considering white's king is in the center. But maybe White just didn't have anything better? 19.♖g1 would lead to a bad position for White. 19...♕h2 20.♖xg5 ♖xe3+ 21.♔d1 ♖xf3 and although the position is complicated, it should be in Black's favor.

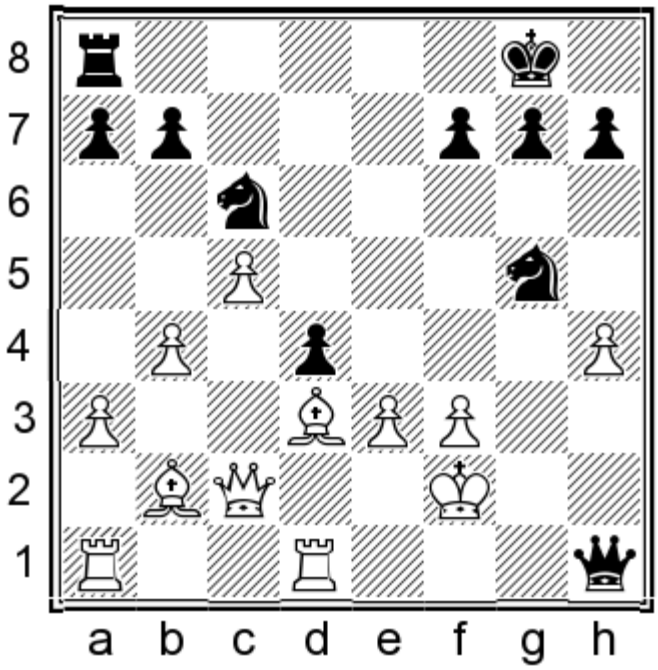
19...♖xe3+

Too easy to miss for a top class player... 19...♕h2 didn't work now as after 20.hxg5 ♖xe3+ 21.♔d2 ♖xf3 White has an escape square: 22.♔c1 ♖xf2 23.♕b3 with an almost winning position for White.

20.fxe3 ♕h2+ 21.♔f1

The position seems to be a draw, but is it really?!

21...♕h1+ 22.♔f2



22...♕h2+

Karjakin seems to be happy with a draw, which is not a bad result with Black against the World Nr3, but Black could have gone for much more! 22...♕xh4+ 23.♔f1 ♕h1+ 24.♔f2 The position looks like a draw, but now comes 24...♕xf3+ 25.♔g1 and then the amazing 25...♖e8!! and it seems like Black is the one pushing here, even though he is a rook down...

23.♔f1 ♕h1+ 24.♔f2 ♕h2+

A great — and very interesting — game!

1/2

GAME 27
V. Ivanchuk (2739)
M. Vachier-Lagrave (2745)
Caleta ENG Caleta ENG (10.1)
06.02.2014, [A15]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

We are in the last round of the Gibraltar Open. Ivanchuk was half a point ahead of the field, and therefore he was not against making a draw. Despite having the black pieces, Vachier-Lagrave succeeded in creating fire on the board!

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4

Ivanchuk wants to play one of the Anti-Gruenfeld lines against Vachier's favorite opening.

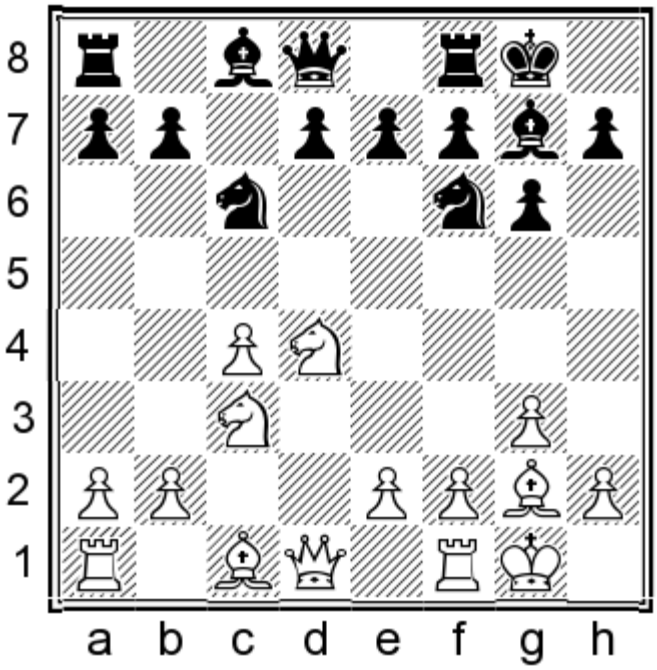
2...c5 3.g3 g6 4.♗g2 ♗g7 5.0-0 0-0

The Symmetrical English is on the board, which usually leads to a calm game with a small edge for White due to his extra tempo.

6.d4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘c6

The strong alternative is 7...d5 which is considered to give full equality. However it had the serious drawback in the current tournament situation that if White wants to, he can force a draw with 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♘b5 ♗e6 10.♘d4 ♗c8 11.♘b5 and Black cannot avoid the repetition!

8.♘c3



8...♕a5!?

A new direction, which enjoys huge popularity since last year even on the highest-level, thanks to Grischuk's efforts.

Black creates the direct threat of ♕c5 with a double attack. Therefore White has two main choices, 9.♘b3 and 9.♘c2, but in both cases Black switches the queen to h5 with the idea of quickly trading the strong g2 bishop with d6 and ♗h3. 8...♘xd4 9.♕xd4 d6 and 8...♘g4 were the previous two main-lines.

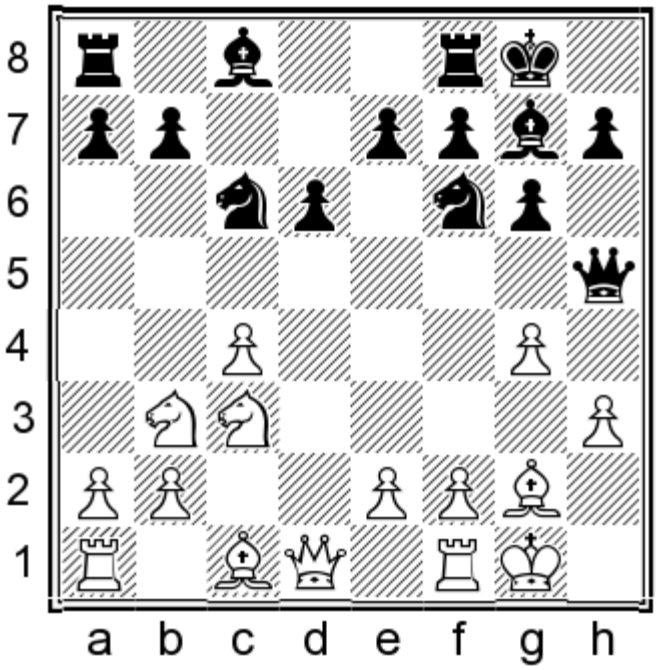
9.♘b3 ♕h5

It is unclear at the moment how White should react here. White has tried 10.c5, 10.e4 and 10.♘d5, but Black seems to get decent counterplay everywhere so Ivanchuk tries another plan!

10.h3!?

White fights against the d6-♗h3 idea in the most direct way and also tries to point out the misplacement of the black queen...

10...d6 11.g4



11...♗xg4!

Ivanchuk has provoked this tempting sacrifice. The game takes an extremely sharp turn now... 11...♕h4 is just too slow. It would have strongly been met by 12.♗f4! and Black has no time to make use of the h3-g4 weakening because of the misplacement of his queen. The consequent 12...h5? drops a piece after 13.♗g3! ♕g5 14.f4 ♕h6 15.g5+–

12.hxg4 ♘xg4 13.♗f4!

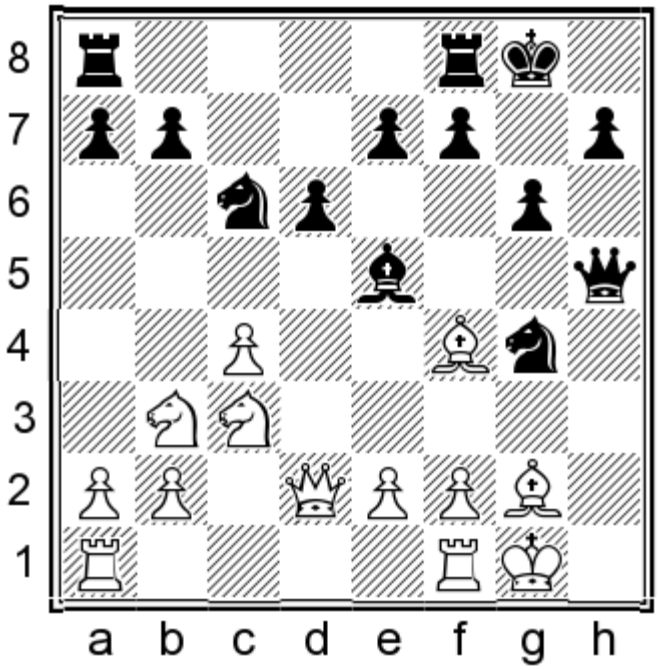
The only move. 13.♖e1 leads to a crushing attack after 13...♗xc3! 14.bxc3 ♕h2+ 15.♔f1 ♕h4! Black had taken the knight two moves ago to avoid ♘e4. 16.♗e3 ♘xe3+ 17.fxe3 ♘e5∓ White may have no good defence against the threatened ...♘g4 and ...f5-f4 ideas. Even materially Black is doing fine, but the attack is more important.

13...♗e5!

Eliminating the defender of the h2 square! Black also needs to attack precisely, otherwise White quickly pushes back

the pieces with f3, for example, and ends up with an extra piece.

14.♕d2



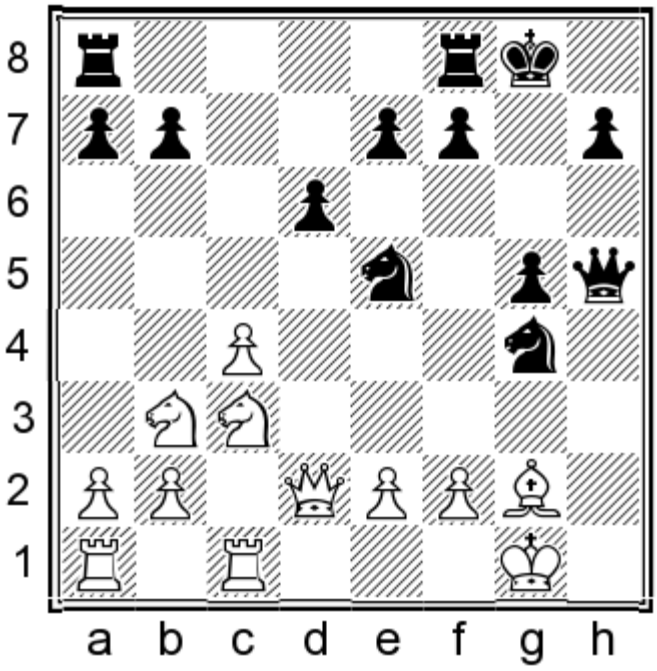
Trying to bring another piece to the protection of the h2 square, but with his next move Black manages to clarify things in his favor.

14...g5!

White cannot hold the f4 square anymore, so the only way to avoid getting mated is to free the f1 square for the king.

15.♗xe5 ♘cxe5 16.♖fc1!

As we will see, it is very important to keep the d1 square free for the knight in order to be able to defend the f2 square!



16.♖fd1 is met by 16...♘xc4 17.♕d4 ♕h2+! 18.♔f1 ♕h4! and here we can see that White cannot protect the f2 square with ♘d1. The game is over now. Two spectacular finishes could be 19.♔g1 (*19.♘e4* is refuted by *19...♘ce3+! 20.fxe3 f5!*–+ and mate is coming soon.) 19...e5! 20.♕xc4 ♕xf2+ 21.♔h1 ♕h4+ 22.♔g1 ♕h2+ 23.♔f1 ♘e3+–+ wins the queen.

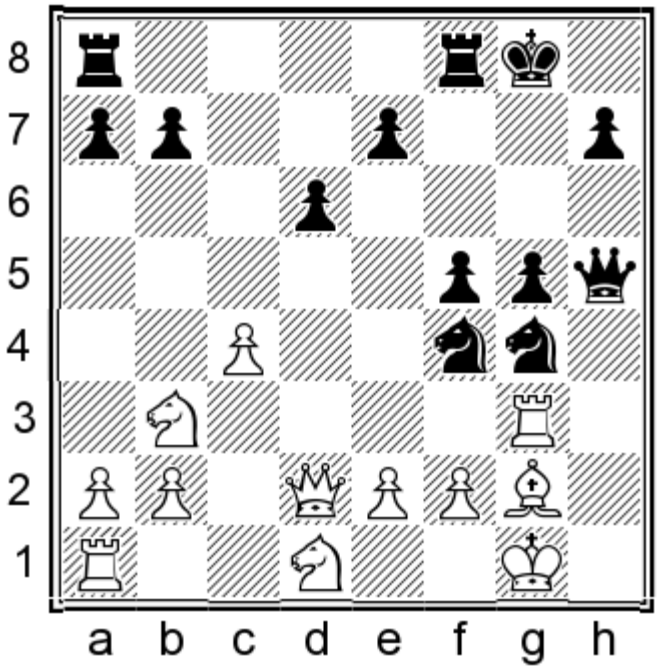
16...f5!?

Actually only this is the novelty of the game (!) but it is quite a scary one as Black intends to attack with f4, ♘ce5 and f3! The white pieces are all directed at the queenside and it is not easy to switch them back to defence quickly. The previous game ended in a more-or-less forced draw after 16...♘xc4 17.♕d3 ♘ce3! 18.fxe3 ♕h4! and the game ends with perpetual check in any case... 19.♘d5 (*19.e4 ♕f2+ 20.♔h1 ♕h4* White is forced to repeat with ♔g1, otherwise he loses his queen with ♘f2. *19.♘d1* also leads to a draw after *19...♕e1+ 20.♗f1 ♕g3+ 21.♗g2 ♕e1*) 19...♕f2+ 20.♔h1 ♕h4+ 21.♔g1 ♕f2+ 22.♔h1 ♕h4+ A draw was agreed in Zhou Jianchao-Matlakov, Kazan 2013. Both players were probably familiar with this game, but Vachier-Lagrave had prepared his dangerous improvement at home.

17.♘d4

Trying to trade one of the attackers with ♘f3. 17.f3? was not an option for White in view of 17...♕h2+ 18.♔f1 ♕g3! and Black wins in all lines: 19.fxg4 (*19.♘d1 ♘h2+ 20.♔g1 ♘hxf3+! 21.exf3 ♘xf3+*–+) 19...fxg4+ 20.♔g1 ♖f2 21.♕d5+ e6 22.♕e4 ♘f3+!–+;

17.♘d1!? was the alternative for White, not only protecting the f2 square, but also to include a defender along the 3rd rank with ♖c3-h3! Black also needs to be careful here. 17...♘g6! seems like the only move to drive the knight to f4 and avoid ♖h3. (*17...f4? 18.♖c3*± White holds and Black soon runs out of compensation.) 18.♖c3 (*18.e3* looks really scary after *18...♕h2+ 19.♔f1 f4!*) 18...♘f4 19.♖g3

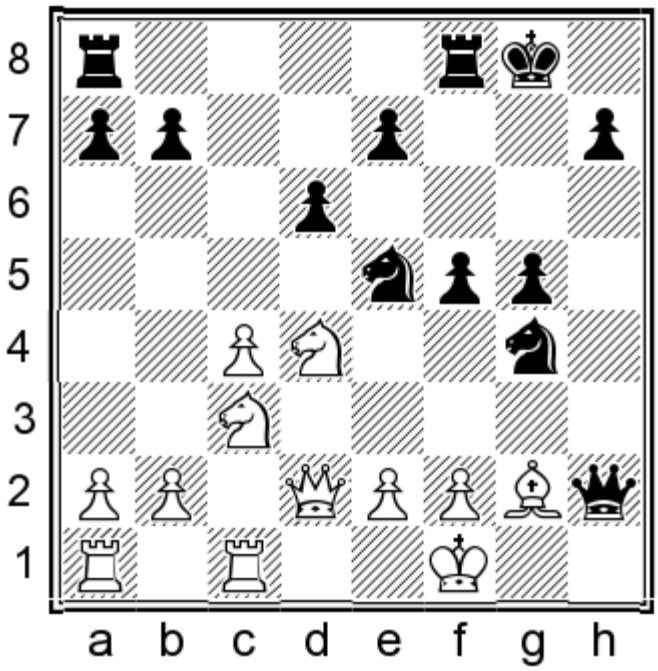


19...♔h8!! After this extremely solid prophylactic move, Black is planning to bring in a new attacker with ♖f6-h6. White seems to be in deep trouble. (After *19...♖f6? 20.e3! ♕h2+ 21.♔f1 ♘xg2* White has *22.♕d5+!* and the queen takes back on g2! This is the reason for the "mysterious" ♔h8 move!) 20.e3? now loses to 20...♕h2+ 21.♔f1 ♘xg2 22.♖xg2 ♕h1+ 23.♖g1 ♘h2+! 24.♔e2 ♕xg1–+

17...♕h2+

On 17...f4?! White successfully defends with 18.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 19.exf3±

18.♔f1

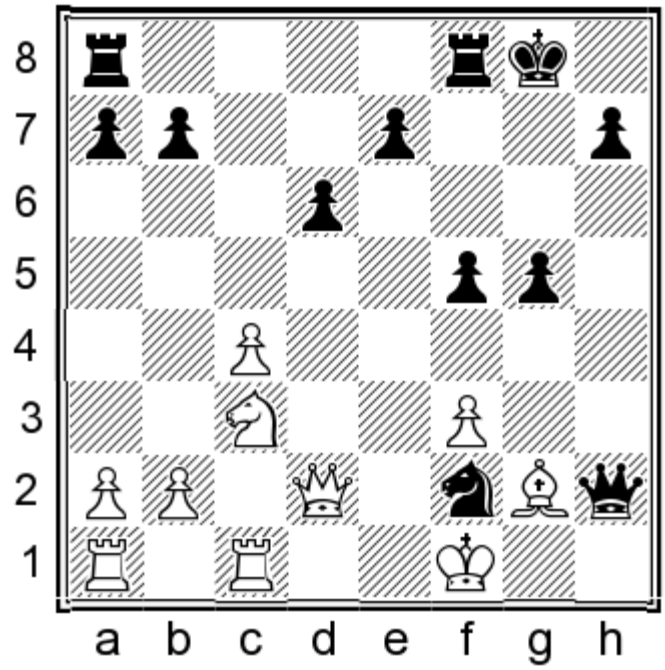


18...♘xf2!!

A brilliant attack by Vachier-Lagrave! Ivanchuk had to be really upset at this point, facing such an attack after only 18 moves when he only needs a draw. However he managed to stay calm and found a cold-blooded defence to save the game!

19.♔xf2!

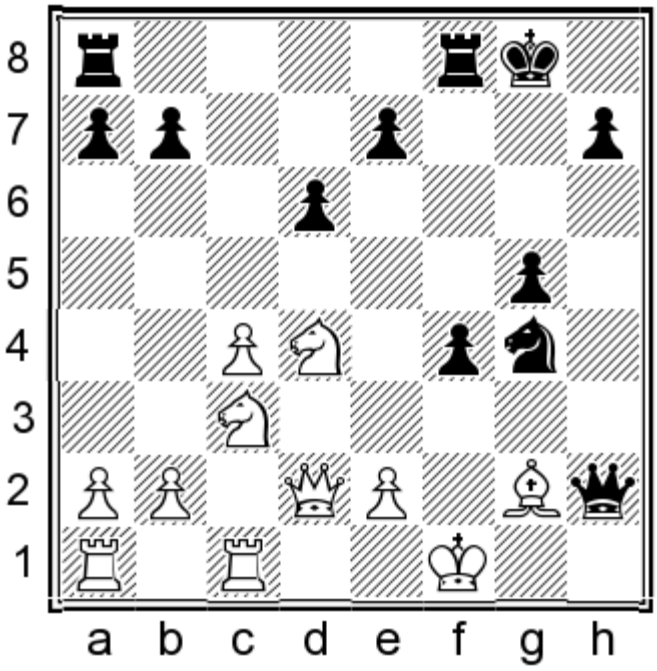
Obviously the most natural reaction, but White had two serious alternatives as well and it requires very deep evaluation to make the correct decision. 19.♕xg5+ ♔h8 20.♔xf2 proves to be worse after 20...♘g4+! It is important to first send the king to the back rank to avoid ♖h1. (*20...♖g8? 21.♖h1!+–* suddenly wins for White.) 21.♔e1 ♕g1+ 22.♗f1 ♕f2+ 23.♔d2 ♕xd4+ 24.♔c2 ♘e3+ 25.♔b1 We reach this position basically by force after 19.♕xg5. Black has two pawns for the piece, but the white pieces are so poor and cramped on the queenside that only Black can be better. 25...♖f7 After protecting the e7 pawn Black activates his other rook through the g-file. 19.♘f3 ♘xf3 20.exf3 looks good for White at first sight, but



20...♘e4! opens the f-file. 21.♘xe4 fxe4 22.♕d5+ ♔h8 23.♕xe4 ♖f4! Black simply brings his pieces in with ...♖af8 and ...g4 and White has no adequate defence! 24.♕xb7 (*24.♕xe7 ♖af8–+*) 24...♖af8 25.♖c3 g4∓

19...♘g4+ 20.♔f1 f4

This is the point behind the sacrifice on f2. Black creates the deadly threat of ♘e3. White needs to find another ‘only move’, which had to be foreseen before taking on f2.



21.♕d3!!

Freeing the d2-square for the king. White is already two pieces up, so the king cannot be allowed to run... 21.♘d1? loses to 21...♘e3+ 22.♘xe3 fxe3+–+;

21.♘f3? also loses after 21...♘e3+! 22.♕xe3 (*22.♔e1 ♕g3#*) 22...fxe3–+ and the queen cannot be taken...

21...♕h4!

The king had to be kept in the mating net! 21...♘e3+? 22.♔e1 followed by ♔d2 wins for White.

22.♘d1!

Covering the f2-square and creating the threats of ♕h3 and ♘f3, forcing Black to play...

22...♘e3+! 23.♘xe3 fxe3+ 24.♔g1 ♕f2+ 25.♔h1

Black has nothing better than giving perpetual check.

25...♕h4+

25...♖f4 also leads to a draw after 26.♘f5 ♖h4+ 27.♘xh4 ♕xh4+ 28.♔g1 ♕f2+ 29.♔h2 ♕f4+! 30.♔h1 ♕h4. The tempting 25...♖f6? does not work because of 26.♘f5! ♖xf5 27.♖f1 ♕h4+ 28.♔g1+– and Black doesn't have a perpetual anymore...

26.♔g1 ♕f2+ 27.♔h1 ♕h4+

An excellent game full of beautiful tactical motifs.

1/2

GAME 28
V. Anand (2770)
D. Andreikin (2709)
FIDE Candidates 2014 Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (12.4)
27.03.2014, [B18]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Anand played a very pretty game, spoiling the win only at the last moment. We must add that the draw was a perfectly fine result for him in view of the tournament standing and possibly, if he really had to win, he would have won this game too.

1.e4

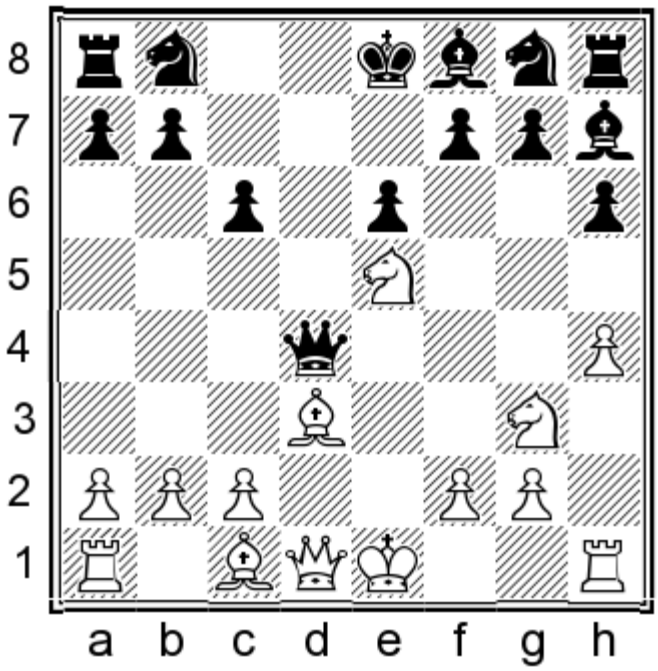
It is quite impossible to predict Andreikin's opening choice. He plays something new in almost all his games, and this time he goes for the Caro-Kann defence.

1...c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♗f5 5.♘g3 ♗g6 6.h4 h6 7.♘f3 e6

This is quite a side-line compared to 7...♘d7, however in the Anand-Carlsen WCC match last year, Carlsen played this system in the first round and achieved an easy draw. Andreikin decided to repeat it and check what Anand had planned as an improvement.

8.♘e5 ♗h7 9.♗d3 ♗xd3

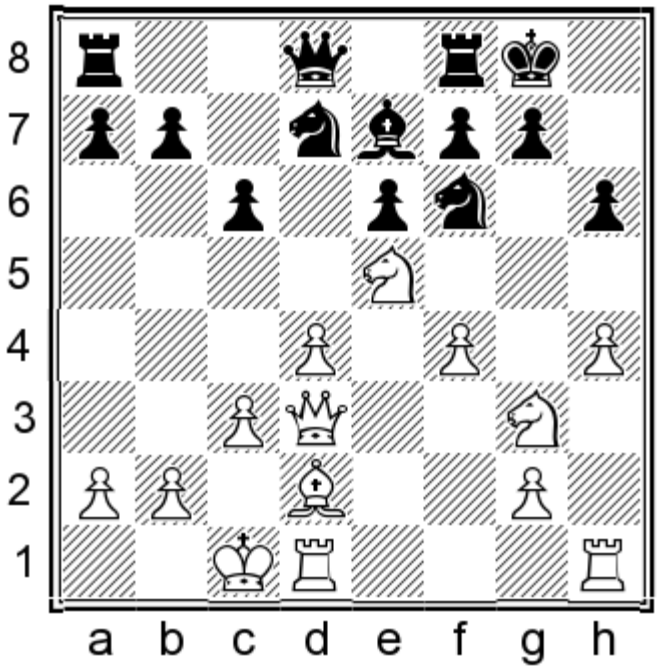
The pawn on d4 is poisoned: 9...♕xd4?



10.♘xf7! with a decisive material gain for White. 10...♔xf7 (*10...♗xd3 11.♘xh8*+–) 11.♗g6+! ♗xg6 12.♕xd4+–

10.♕xd3 ♘d7 11.f4 ♗b4+ 12.c3 ♗e7 13.♗d2 ♘gf6 14.0-0-0 0-0

Nothing new has happened until this moment. We have basically reached the initial position of the 7...e6 line.



15.♕f3

This is the improvement, but not yet a novelty. White intends to push f5, but first he had to leave the pin on the d-file in order to be able to recapture with dxe5. In the match, Anand played 15.♘e4 but it leads to a more-or-less forced draw after mass exchanges: 15...♘xe4 16.♕xe4 ♘xe5 17.fxe5 ♕d5 18.♕xd5 cxd5 and a draw was soon agreed in Anand-Carlsen, Chennai 2013.

15...♕c7

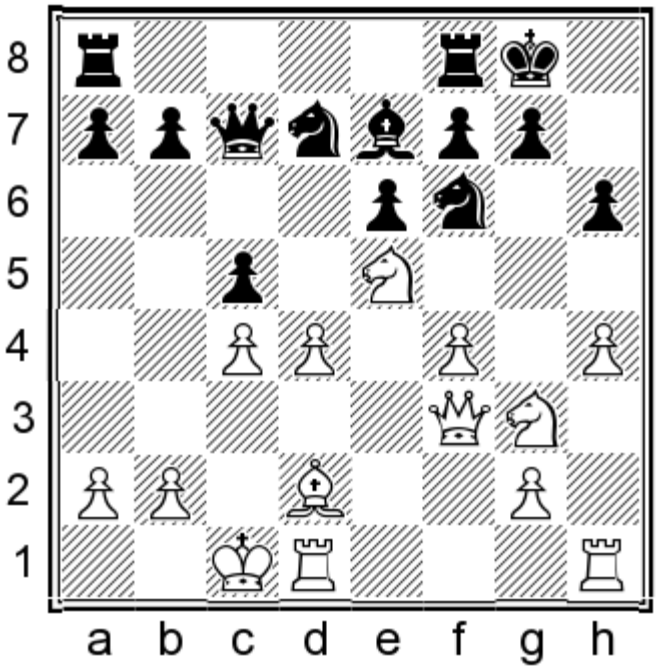
Black not only develops his queen, but also keeps an eye on the e5-knight to parry the f5 threat! He is ready to execute the typical Caro-Kann break with c5! Anand's next move is aimed against this plan.

16.c4!

A strong prophylactic move. Black has a much harder task finding play on the queenside now.

16...a5

With the idea of trading the bishops with ♗b4, and White reacts with the usual prophylactic move... 16...b5 does not work as the c6 pawn is hanging, but even if Black prepares for this with, let's say, ...♖ac8, this move could always be met by 17.c5 locking the queenside. It is true that Black gets the d5 square for his knight, but the attack on the kingside becomes a more relevant factor. White will remove his knight from g3 and then launch an attack with g4-g5! The other break with 16...c5 is also wrong as White has the very strong reply of



17.d5! This is a standard break, with which all Caro-Kann players are familiar... 17...exd5 (*17...♘xe5 18.fxe5 ♕xe5 19.♗f4!* traps the queen!) 18.♘f5! ♖fe8 19.♕g3+– with a crushing attack.

17.♔b1

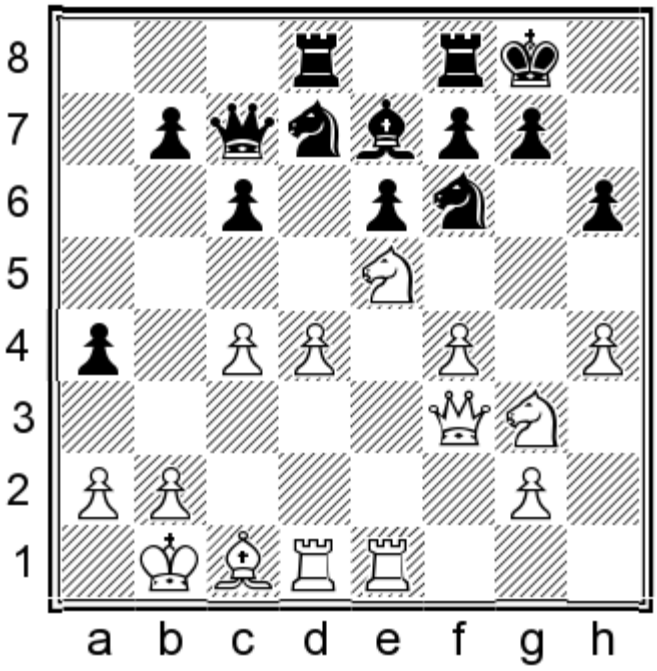
With the idea of freeing the c1 square for the bishop in the event of ♗b4.

17...♖ad8 18.♗c1 a4

This is the novelty. 18...♖fe8 occurred previously. 19.♘e2 c5 (The standard reaction of Black when the knight leaves the g3 square is *19...h5!?*, which must be the critical move, but Anand had definitely prepared something here...) 20.g4! with a very strong attack in the Topalov-Dreev, New Delhi 2000 game. 18...c5 is still met by the usual 19.d5! with exactly the same ideas as in the 16...c5 line.

19.♖he1

White strengthens his e5 knight, therefore he is ready to push f5! Black must quickly look for counterplay.



19.♘e2 must again be met by 19...h5!

19...a3

Accepting the pawn sacrifice should never come into consideration. First of all, those doubled pawns could hardly be counted as a healthy extra pawn, and it would also expose the king too much.

20.b3 ♗b4

Black confuses the harmony between the white pieces and prepares the following central break.

21.♖e3 c5

21...♖fe8!? could have been a final useful preparation for this break.

22.d5!

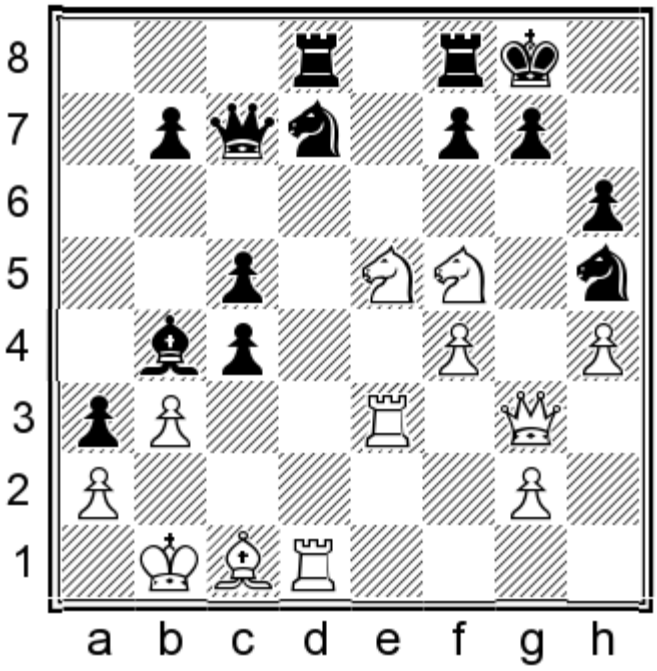
Always this move, otherwise Black quickly seizes the initiative with cxd4 and ♘c5.

22...exd5 23.cxd5

23.♘f5!? was a serious alternative. 23...dxc4

(*23...d4* keeps the pawn with tempo, however after *24.*♖*e2* the white pieces are so dominating that the attack with ♕g3 or with the simple g4-g5 will break through. Against such an attack the only defensive idea can be to open the center with dxc4!)

24.♕g3 ♘h5



25.♖xd7! Eliminating a defender!

(On the direct *25.*♕*g4* Black has *25...*♘*df6!*)

25...♕xd7! The only move! Both queens are hanging!

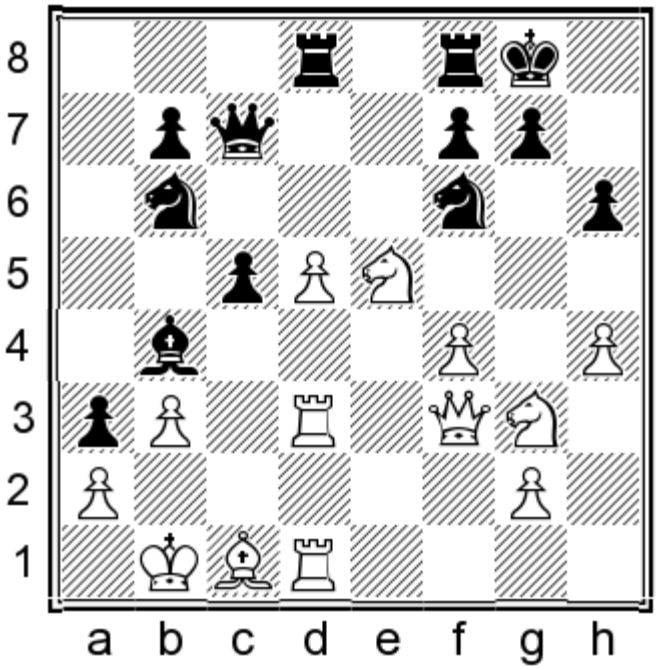
(*25...*♖*xd7 26.*♕*g4+*– wins. Black cannot avoid huge material losses and White continues attacking.)

26.♘xh6+!

(*26.*♕*g4* ♕*d1!* is Black's subtle defensive resource!)

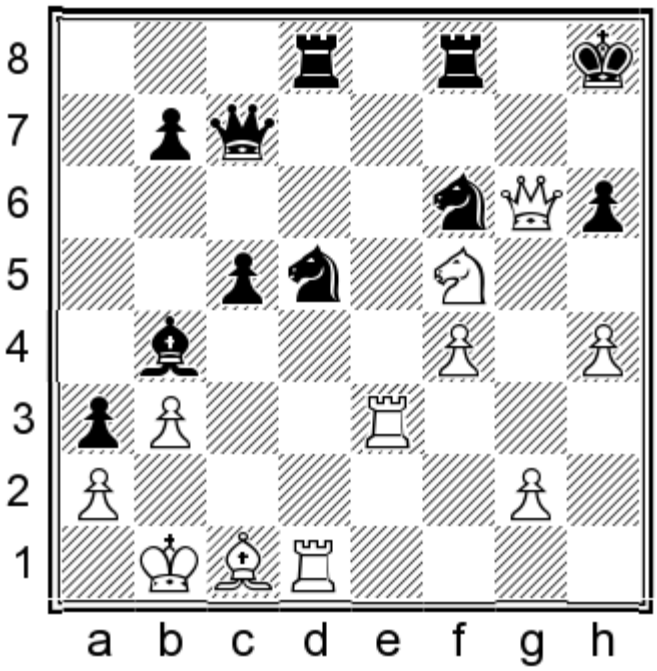
26...♔h7 27.♘xd7 ♘xg3 28.♘xf8+ ♖xf8 29.♖xg3 ♔xh6 30.bxc4 ♖e8 when the complications are over and the resulting position should be drawn.

23...♘b6 24.♖ed3



Just as on the previous move, 24.♘f5!? was very interesting and it seems to lead to a draw again after 24...♘bxd5 25.♕g3 ♘h5!

(*25...g6* is dubious in view of *26.♘xg6! fxg6 27.♕xg6+ ♔h8*



28.♖e7! Black is forced to sacrifice his queen to avoid the mate on g7! *28...♕xe7 29.♘xe7 ♘xe7 30.♕xh6+ ♘h7 31.♖xd8 ♖xd8* Black has some material advantage, but the pawn storm on the kingside is going to swat him away... *32.g4+–*)

26.♘xh6+ ♔h7 27.♕g5 gxh6 28.♕f5+! Driving the king to the wrong square. 28...♔h8 29.♕xh5 ♘xe3 and White has nothing more than a perpetual check: 30.♕xh6+ ♔g8 31.♕g5.

24...♕c8?

The decisive mistake. Black was too annoyed by the ♘f5 ideas and wanted to prevent it in the most direct way, but this is just too slow. According to the machines 24...♘bxd5 should have been played. 25.♖xd5 ♘xd5 26.♖xd5 ♖xd5 27.♕xd5 ♖d8 It is very 'unhuman' to give material like this. In my opinion White is just clearly better, with such a knight on e5 and the g3 one is going to be activated as well, but the machine stubbornly defends Black's position... 28.♕c4;

24...♘c8 was logical to put a blockader on d6, but it could have been met by 25.♘g4! ♘xg4 26.♕xg4 with extremely good attacking chances after ♘h5 and f5. The bishop also joins the attack on h6 and the rook could also be switched to g3. 24...c4 contained a direct problem, as after 25.bxc4 ♘xc4 26.♘xc4 ♕xc4 27.♖d4! the queen has no good square to go to. The bishop on b4 has lost its fortress and it gets into trouble after 27...♕c5 28.♕b3!

25.d6!

The d-pawn is just too strong.

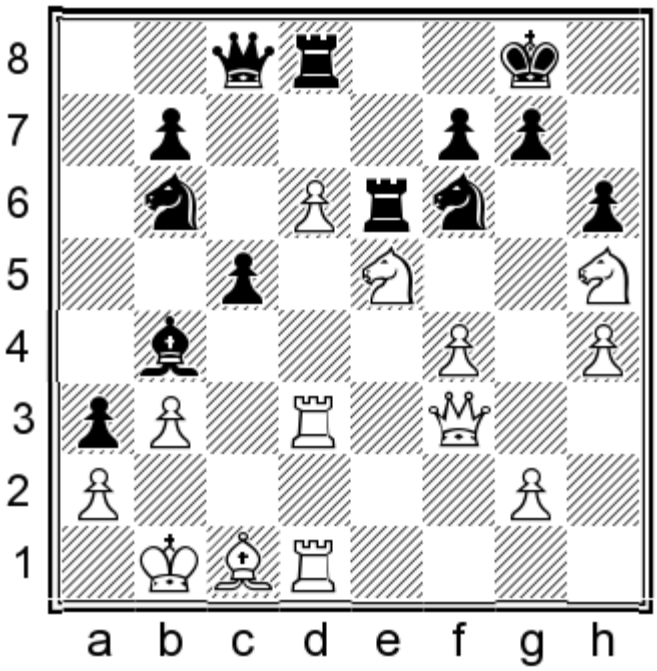
25...♖fe8

Black cannot create counterplay with 25...c4 because of 26.bxc4 ♘xc4 27.♖d4! ♘xe5 fxe5 wins a piece due to the double attack. 27...b5 28.♘c6!+– White wins a piece as the knight is threatening to jump in three directions, e7, b4 and d8.

26.♘h5!

The attack rolls after this move! White often has the option of swinging his rook over to g3.

26...♖e6



White can choose between many winning lines. 26...♕f5 27.g4+– is also over. 26...♘xh5 27.♕xh5 ♕e6 loses to 28.d7! ♖e7 29.♖d6+– trapping the queen.

27.♘xf6+

The most direct would have been 27.d7 ♕c7. Now the strongest is

a) 27...♘bxd7 28.♘xf6++– wins a piece.

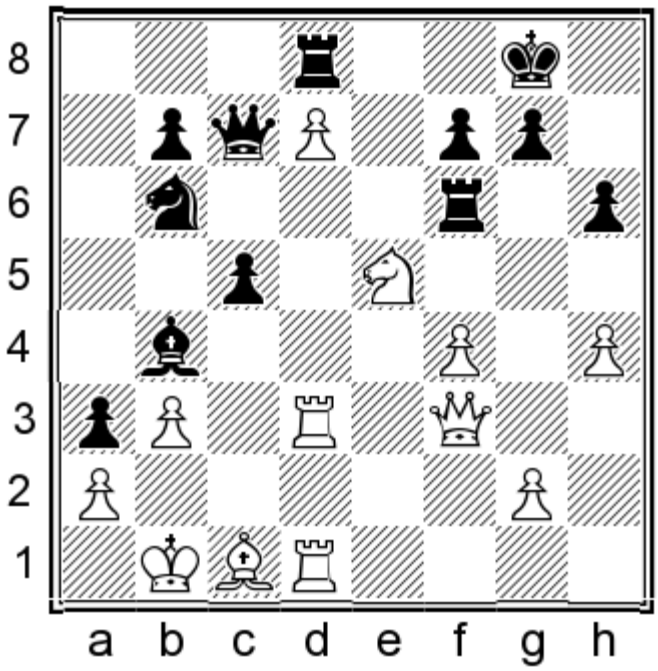
b) 27...♘fxd7 is refuted by 28.♕g4! g6 29.♘xf7 (*29.f5 ♖xe5 30.fxg6+–* is also mating.) 29...♔xf7 30.f5+– and Black gets mated soon.;

28.f5! ♖xe5 29.♘xf6+ gxf6 (*29...♔h8 30.♕h5+–* followed by ♗xh6 is over.) 30.♗xh6+– and again mate is arriving soon.

27...♖xf6 28.d7

28.♘g4!? was also winning in view of the following lines: 28...♖e6 (*28...♖f5 29.♘xh6+ gxh6 30.♕g4+ ♔h7 31.d7+–* wins the rook on f5.) 29.f5 ♖e1 30.♘xh6+! gxh6 31.♕g4+ ♔h7 32.♕h5+– and mate is inevitable.

28...♕c7



29.♕g4!

White is threatening to play ♖g3. The d7 pawn completely paralyzes Black's potential defenses, so Andreikin tries the best practical chance to complicate matters a bit...

29...c4 30.♖g3 g6

30...♗f8 is refuted by a pretty deflection of the f8 bishop: 31.♗xa3!+–

31.h5! cxb3 32.♖xb3

Both sides are heavily attacking each others' king, but White is clearly ahead, although Andreikin continues his resourceful play and offers further problems to solve.

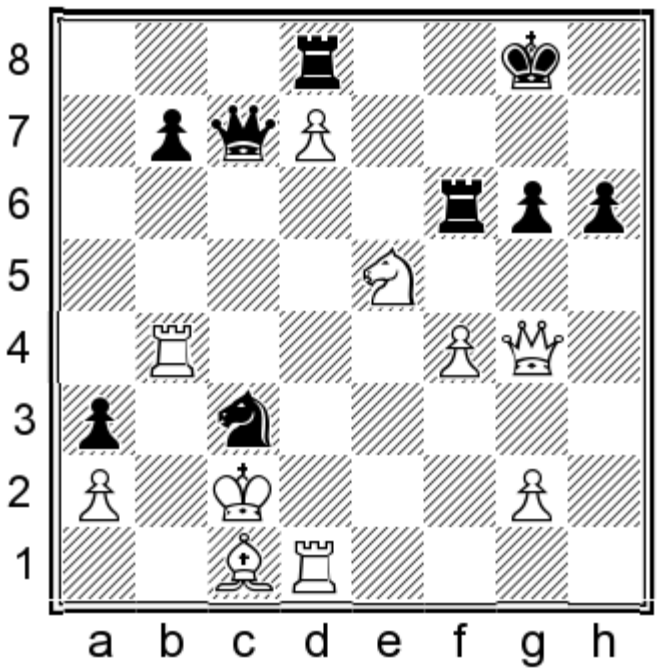
32...♘a4 33.hxg6 fxg6

33...♘c3+ loses to 34.♖xc3 ♕xc3 35.gxf7+ ♔h7 36.♕g8+! ♖xg8 37.fxg8=♕+ ♔xg8 38.d8=♕++–

34.♖xb4!

Anand is rightly unafraid of the c3 check!

34...♘c3+ 35.♔c2



35...b5!

Again the best practical chance. Most players would have already collapsed, but Andreikin tries until his last breath. 35...♘xd1+ or ♘xa2 are met by 36.♖c4!+– and the queen takes back on d1 with a decisive material advantage — and also the d7 pawn is still on the board.

36.♔b3! ♘a4!

Threatening ♕c3! If 36...♘xd1 37.♕xd1+– is game over.

37.♕f3?

Under time-pressure, Anand makes a mistake. It would have been much easier to play 37.♗d2 ♘c5+ 38.♔xa3+– followed by ♔b2 and there is nothing left to try for Black.

37...♘c5+! 38.♔c2 ♘a4+! 39.♔b3 ♘c5+ 40.♔c2 ♘a4+

Finally the players have passed the time-control and they received an extra hour. Anand thought for some time and decided to repeat moves and agree a draw, as he saw that all the other games were finished and a draw was now a good result from his point of view.

41.♔b3

41.♖c4! and White was actually winning after 41...bxc4 42.♗xa3 with the threat of ♗e7. 42...♕b6 43.♕d5+ ♔h7 44.♕xc4+– Black cannot create any serious threats because of the pawn on d7, but on the other hand it is understandable that Anand did not want to risk this when a draw would take him a huge step closer to the final victory.

41.♔d2 ♕d6+ 42.♘d3 ♖f7! followed by ♖fxd7 should also be winning for White with the extra piece, but here things are not so clear. We must admit that the Andreikin's resourceful defence in a 'hopeless' position reaped its rewards!

1/2

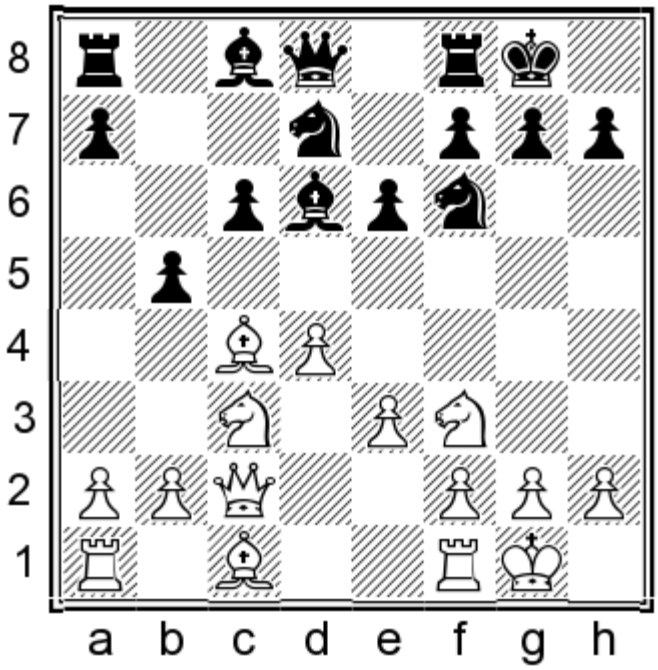
GAME 29
D. Wagner (2481)
A. Shirov (2685)
Bundesliga 2013–14 Eppingen GER (13.5)
04.04.2014, [D45]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

A very sharp game, played typically in the style of Shirov. The game also appears to be very important from a theoretical viewpoint.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7

The starting position of the Meran, where White can choose between two very serious lines, 6.♗d3 and 6.♕c2.

6.♕c2 ♗d6 7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 dxc4 9.♗xc4 b5



10.♗e2

The players are following the latest fashion. 10.♗d3 is an equally huge and complex main line.

10...♗b7

Black slowly prepares the freeing central break with ...e5, or sometimes ...b4 followed by ...c5 also works.

11.e4

11.♖d1 is the most common move, when Black usually plays 11...♕c7 leaving the pin on the d-file and refreshing his e5 idea.

11...e5

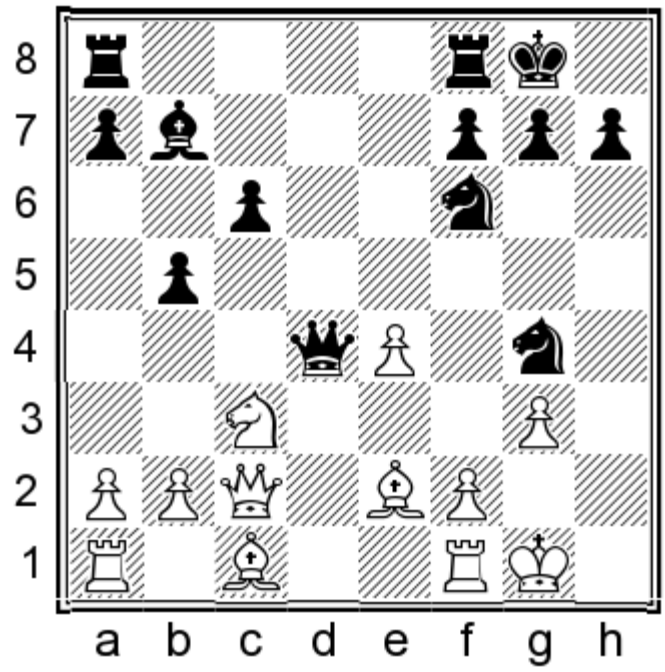
This reply is always obligatory on White's e4 move as he cannot allow White to push e5.

12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘d4!?

This forgotten move was found by the French GM Fressinet. There is a very deep positional idea behind it. The move is extremely logical of course, as White would like to install his knight on f5, which would guarantee him a clear edge, but it steps into a tactical trick...

13...♘eg4 14.g3 ♗c5!

This is Shirov's improvement and the start of the wild complications! 13.♘d4 was considered to be dubious because of 14...♗xg3 winning a pawn, but Fressinet had discovered the following plan: 15.hxg3 ♕xd4



16.♕d1! White forces the trade of the queens and enters an endgame a pawn down. However, there are plenty of plusses for White. First of all, he has the pair of bishops. The knights do not have any stability on g4 and f6, they could easily be squeezed back with f3, ♘e5, f4 and e5 next. Black got rid of his strong bishop and ended up with the passive one on b7.

These facts told Fressinet that White should have pleasant compensation for the pawn. 16...♕xd1 17.♖xd1 ♖fe8 (*17...♖fd8* happened in another game, which continued with *18.f3 ♖xd1+ 19.♘xd1 ♘e5 20.♗e3 ♖d8 21.♘f2 a6 22.♖c1* and f4 is coming next. It is very unpleasant to play as Black without having any active plan, just to sit and watch his opponent improving his position with each move. Anand's second Wojtaszek won a game like this.) 18.f3 ♘e5 19.♗e3 a6 20.♖d6 ♖ad8 21.♖ad1 ♖xd6 22.♖xd6 h5 23.b4 White is squeezing again! 23...♖e6 24.♖d1 Obviously White keeps the rooks as he controls the only open file. 24...♖e8 25.♔f2 ♘g6 26.♗d4 Already Black could not withstand the pressure and decided to enter a bad endgame after 26...h4 27.gxh4 ♘xh4 28.♗xf6 gxf6 29.♖d7 ♗a8 30.♖a7 White won back the pawn and kept his positional advantages. Fressinet-Ragger, Bundesliga 2013.

15.♘f5 ♖e8

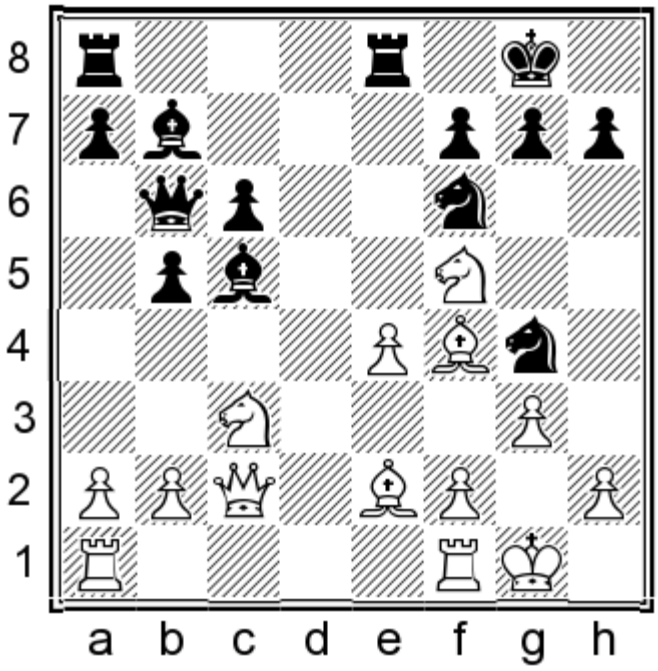
Black activates his pieces with each move.

16.♗f4!

White would like to jump to d6 with his knight at some point. If Black was forced to give up his c5 bishop, he would end up in similar troubles to the 14...♗xg3 line.

16...♕b6!

Only the most direct moves are possible now, but of course Shirov has a special feeling for such things. After one inaccuracy Black could quickly collapse.



16...♘xf2 is materially fine for Black, but positionally terrible. 17.♖xf2 b4 18.♘d1 ♘xe4 19.♗f3! ♘xf2 20.♘xf2± Black has two pawns and a rook against the two minor pieces, but those are so well-placed that only White can be better.

17.♔g2!

A dynamic move by White. He could have defended his f2 weakness passively with ♘d1, or give up the bishop with ♗xg4, but such moves cannot offer him any advantage.

17...♘xf2

Black accepts the challenge. Allowing White to push him back with f3 at some point would have led to the victory of White's opening strategy.

18.e5 ♘d7!

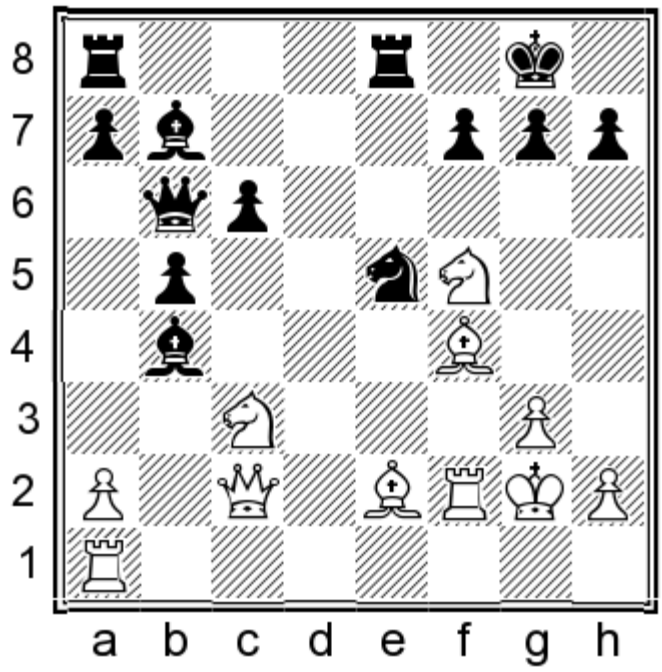
Threatening to take the e5 pawn is a key factor in Black's play. 18...♘d5 drops a piece after 19.♘xd5 cxd5 20.b4! when Black does not have enough compensation. 20...d4+ 21.♔xf2±

19.b4

Winning the piece again, but this time Black gets three pawns and attacking potential as counterplay.

19...♗xb4 20.♖xf2 ♘xe5

Black would like to create real threats on the long diagonal by opening it with ...c5 and in case of ♔g1 then ♕c6.



21.♘xg7!

Trying to finish the game with a decisive blow, but Black also has his resources! After 21.♖af1 the best seems to be 21...♗f8 since before playing ...c5 it is useful to include a defender in order to parry the sacrifices around the g7 square. 22.h3 c5+ 23.♔h2 c4 and ...♘d3 is coming next. The game is completely unclear, but I believe it is easier to play as Black.

21...c5+!

21...♔xg7 is refuted by 22.♗xe5+ ♖xe5 23.♖xf7+! ♔xf7 24.♕xh7+ and now the king has no good square. ♔e8 drops the e5 rook after ♕h8, while after 24...♔e6 White has 25.♗g4+! this is the huge difference from the actual game. 25...♔d6 26.♖d1+ ♔c5 27.♘e4++– leads to mate in few moves.

22.♔h3!

Temporarily this is the safest square for the king on the board. 22.♔g1? or 22.♔f1 both run into 22...♕c6! and Black is mating first.

22...♗c8+!

An important intermezzo to provoke the g4 move! 22...♔xg7 again loses to 23.♗xe5+ ♖xe5 24.♖xf7+! ♔xf7 25.♕xh7+ ♔e8 (*25...♔e6 26.♗g4++–*) 26.♗xb5+ ♗c6 27.♕h8++–

23.g4 ♔xg7!

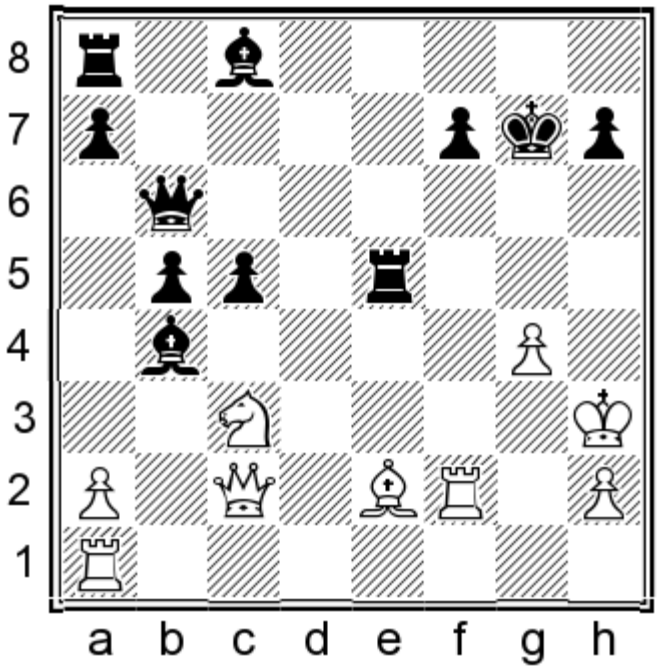
Exactly the right moment to accept the sacrifice! 23...♘xg4 leads to a funny position: 24.♗xg4 ♗xg4+ 25.♔xg4 ♔xg7

and despite the g4-king White is just winning. Black does not have enough material to create serious threats. 26.♖af1+–

24.♗xe5+

24.♘d5 Bringing in a new attacker looks tempting, but Black has the important defensive move 24...♕g6.

24...♖xe5



25.♖xf7+!

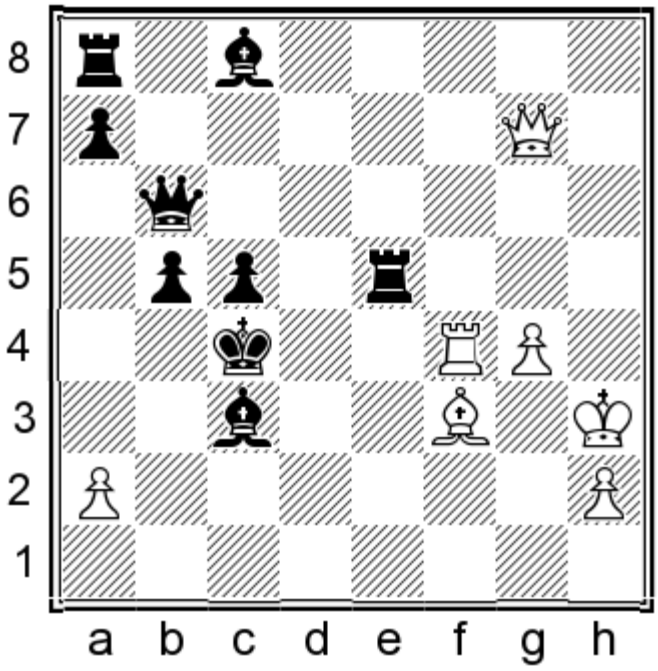
A necessary sacrifice, otherwise Black consolidates and wins. However, without the ♗g4 check, White does not have more than perpetual check.

25...♔xf7 26.♕xh7+ ♔e6 27.♕g6+ ♔e7

Black also cannot hope for more than a draw, because 27...♔d7 leads to mate after 28.♕f7++– and either ♖d1 or ♗f3 wins next move.

28.♕g7+ ♔e6 29.♕h6+

29.♖f1? looks tempting again, but Black takes too much material: 29...♗xc3! A cold-blooded defence, but there is no real danger at the moment. 30.♖f6+ (*30.♕f7+ ♔d6 31.♖f6+ ♗e6*–+) 30...♔d5 31.♗f3+ ♔c4 32.♖f4+



(*32.*♖*xb6* ♖*h5+ 33.*♔*g2* ♗*xg7*–+) 32...♔d3! 33.♕h7+ ♔d2 White has run out of checks and the extra material brings home the full point for Black.

29...♔e7 30.♕h7+ ♔e6 31.♕g6+ ♔e7 32.♕g7+ ♔e6 33.♕g6+

This looks like it was a perfect game! :)

1/2

GAME 30
J. Nepomniachtchi (2732)
P. Svidler (2756)
21st TCh-RUS 2014 Loo RUS (7.1)
13.04.2014, [C45]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

A fascinating game was played in the last round of the Russian league.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4

The Scotch opening. Nepomniachtchi uses this weapon occasionally as an alternative to the Spanish.

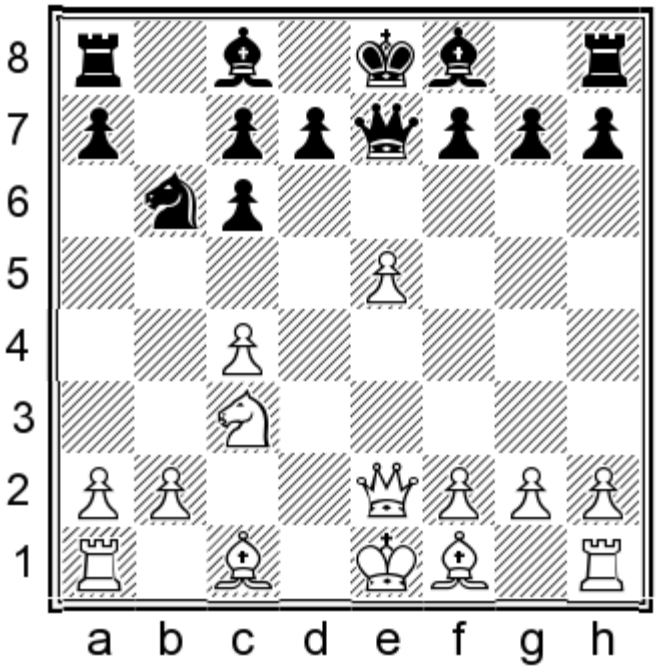
3...exd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6

4...♗c5 is the other huge main-line.

5.♘xc6 bxc6 6.e5 ♕e7 7.♕e2 ♘d5 8.c4 ♘b6

8...♗a6 is the other option for Black, also with very interesting lines.

9.♘c3



9...♗a6!?

This is already a side-line. 9...♕e6 is the most frequently-seen continuation.

10.♕e4

10.b3 is met by a quick attack against the e5 pawn with 10...0-0-0 11.♗b2 ♖e8 12.f4 f6 White was not in time to castle, therefore exf6 isn't possible. 13.0-0-0 fxe5 14.fxe5 ♕xe5 15.♕xe5 ♖xe5 and Black has won a pawn, although the strong b2-bishop and the passive a6 and b6 minor pieces give White enough compensation. In the Karjakin-Kramnik, Dortmund 2012 game, Black soon preferred to give back his material advantage with ...d5 and the game simplified to a draw.

10...g6

Now on 10...0-0-0? White could play 11.c5! as the queen is not pinned. 11...♗xf1 12.cxb6 ♗a6 13.bxa7 ♔b7 14.♗e3 and White is better.

11.♗f4

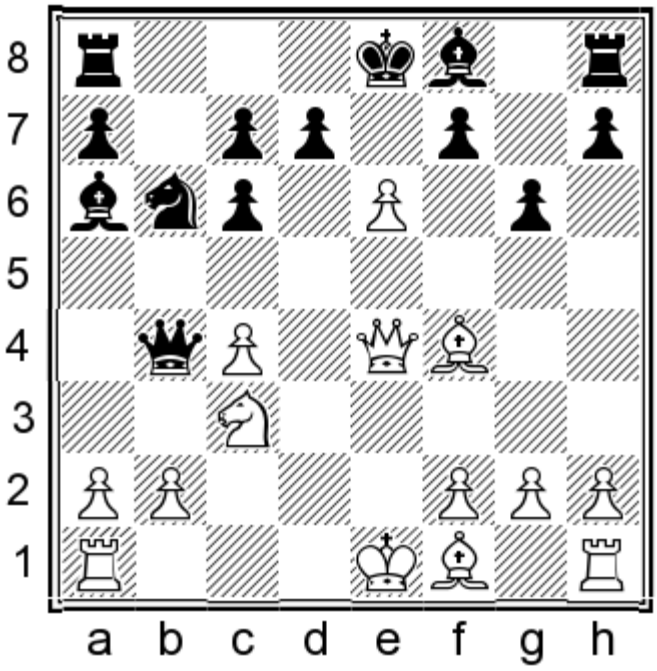
Black has the sweet trick that after 11.c5 ♗xf1 12.cxb6 he can play 12...f5! with the idea that either the e5 or g2 pawns will fall!

11...♕b4!

This is the game's novelty! It looks like a strong one and it leads to a draw more-or-less by force.

12.e6!

Forcing matters. Extreme complications are about to arise.



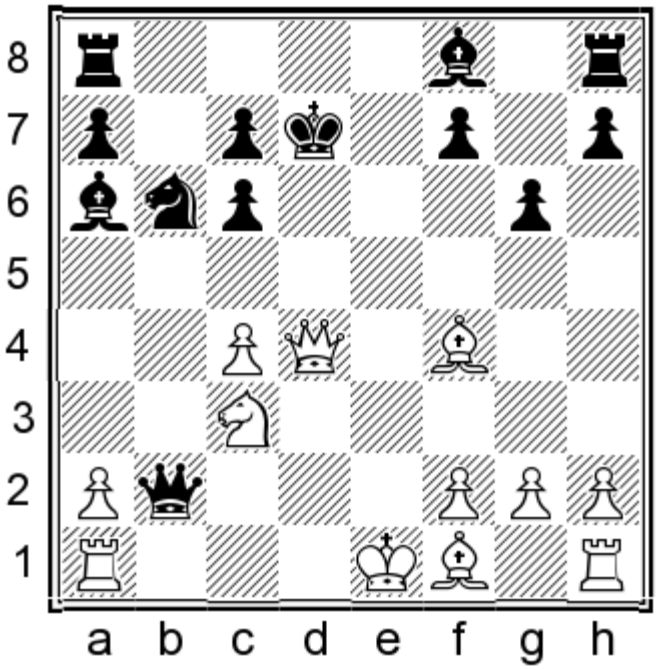
12.0-0-0 ♖b8 looks dangerous from White's point of view.

12...♕xb2!

Svidler correctly accepts the challenge. Black wins material, but a long king run is about to start. 12...fxe6 leads to a worse endgame after 13.♗e5 ♖g8 14.c5! Many pieces are hanging and the only way to not lose big material is 14...♕xe4+ 15.♘xe4 ♗xf1 but White gets a pleasant edge after 16.♘f6+ ♔f7 17.♖xf1 ♘c4 18.♘xd7 ♖d8 19.0-0-0 and White is clearly dominating.

13.exd7+ ♔xd7 14.♕d4+!

The only move! White escapes from the ...♖e8 threat and protects his knight with check.



14.♖d1+? ♗d6 wins as the rook is coming to e8!

14...♘d5!!

Another only move and what an amazing one! Either Svidler had foreseen the forthcoming line or he just had flawless intuition?! Or is he perhaps still following his preparation?! 14...♗d6 is more human, but it leads to a worse position after 15.♖b1 ♖he8+ 16.♗e3 ♕a3 17.c5! and White wins material. Black does not have enough resources to create counterplay against the e1 king. 17...♗xf1 18.♔xf1±

15.cxd5!

There is no way back for White either...

15...♕xa1+ 16.♔d2 ♗xf1!

There was no perpetual check with 16...♕b2+ 17.♔d1 ♕a1+ 18.♔c2+– as the checks have run out.

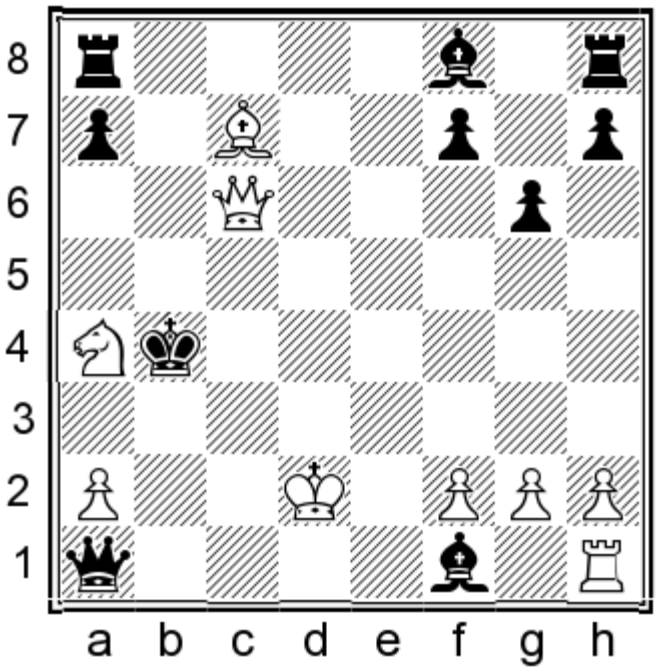
17.dxc6+ ♔xc6!

Other moves lead to a quick mate.

18.♕d5+ ♔b6

It looks extremely scary, but there is no win for White! The f1-bishop fortunately controls the ♕b5 mate, while ♗e3 is simply met by c5. Nepomniachtchi continues hunting the king.

19.♘a4+! ♔a6 20.♕c6+ ♔a5 21.♗xc7+ ♔b4



Fantastic! What a king! Svidler had to see this position long ago, and he was right that there is no more than a perpetual check for White.

22.♕e4+

22.♕b7+!? is a tricky alternative, Black needs to find 22...♔c4! 23.♘b2+

(23.♕b3+ ♔d4 24.f4!? and here the only move to avoid the ♗e5 mate is 24...♖e8! and the game ends with perpetual check after 25.♖xf1 ♕xf1 26.♕b2+ ♔c4

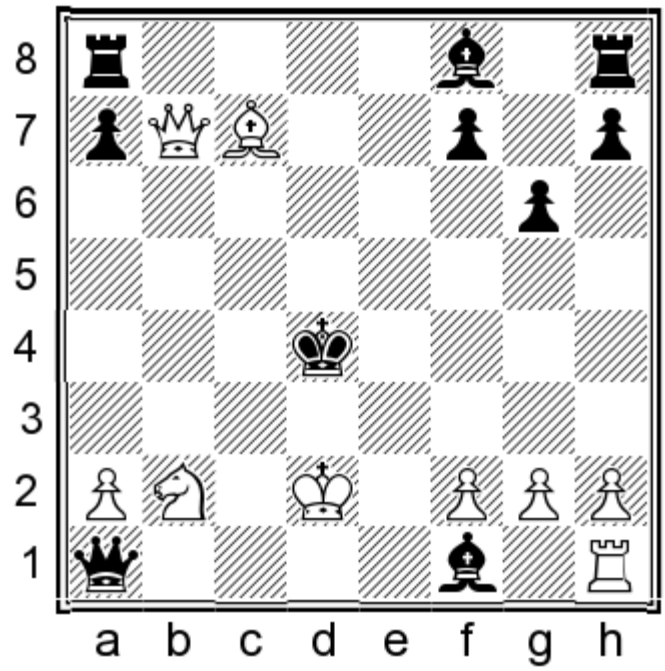
(26...♔d5? trying to hide the king once again loses to 27.♕b7+! ♔c4

(*27...♔e6 28.♕c6+ ♔f5 29.♕d5+ ♔f6 30.♗e5+ ♔f5 31.♕xf7+ ♔g4 32.♕d7+ ♔h5 33.♕h3#*)

28.♕a6++– wins the f1 queen.)

27.♕b3)

23...♔d4



Here White needs to find the only way to save the game: 24.f4! ♖e8 25.♕xa7+ ♗c5 26.♕a4+ ♔d5 27.♕d7+ ♔e4 28.♕c6+ ♔d4 29.♕d7 with a perpetual again.

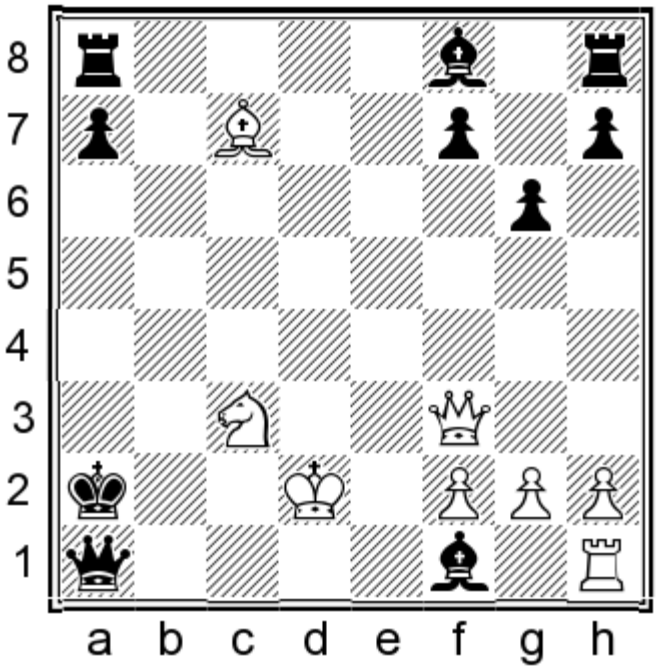
22...♔a3!

Only forward! 22...♔b5? leads to mate after 23.♕d5+! and ♕b3 mates next move, or after 23...♗c5 24.♕xc5+ ♔xa4 25.♕a5#

23.♕f3+!

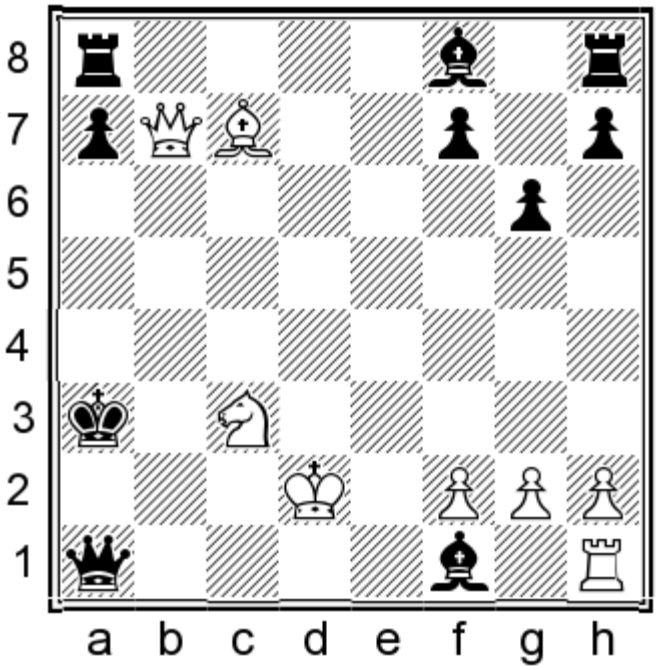
Trying to give the same mate on b3, but Black of course continues the journey with his king and eliminates the a2 pawn!

23...♔xa2! 24.♘c3+



24...♔a3!

And now another only move! The knight has no good discovered check. Other king moves were losing: e.g. 24...♔b2 loses to the brilliant 25.♕b7+ ♔a3



26.♔c2!!+– what a shocking move again! After this subtle king move, there is no good way to prevent the mate on b3. 24...♔b3? is refuted by 25.♕d5+ ♔a3 26.♕a5+ ♔b2 27.♕xa1+ ♔xa1 28.♔c2! and White takes on f1 with mate next move! (*28.♖xf1+ ♔b2 29.♖b1+ ♔a3 30.♔c2+–* is equally good with a mate on b3 next!)

25.♘a2+!

A brilliant last trick! White offers a desperado knight in order to be able to win the queen, but Black is not forced to

accept the sacrifice! 25.♘d5+ ♔a2 26.♘c3+ ♔a3=

25...♔a4!!

25...♔xa2? loses after 26.♕d5+ ♔a3 27.♕a5+ ♔b3 (*27...♔b2 28.♗e5++–*) 28.♕xa1 ♗b4+ 29.♔e3 ♖he8+ 30.♗e5+–

26.♕c6+ ♔a3 27.♕f3+ ♔a4

There are no more ideas left for White to try.

28.♕c6+ ♔a3 29.♕f3+

And a draw was agreed. It would be interesting to know until which moment the players were following their preparations? I would not be surprised if both of them knew all of this beforehand. In any case, an amusing and perfect game!

1/2

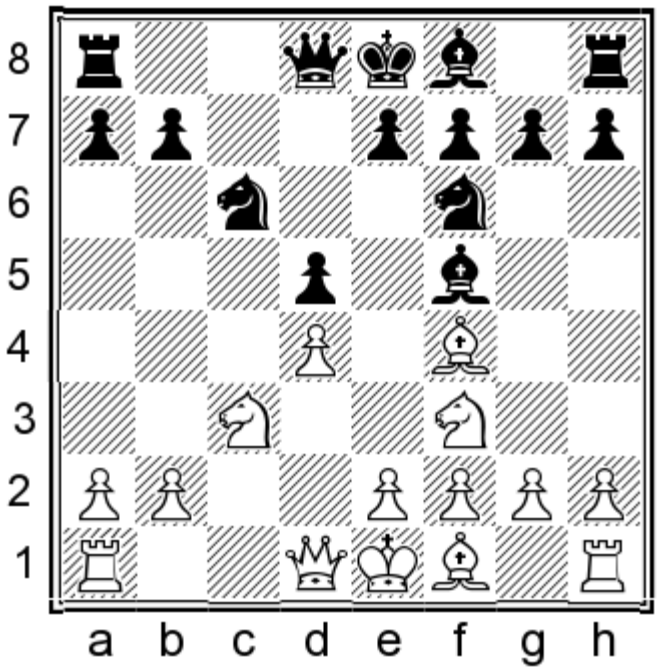
GAME 31
I. Sokolov (2650)
D. Navara (2708)
Saint-Quentin FRA Saint-Quentin FRA (1.1)
24.05.2014, [D14]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

A tense and entertaining battle with many nice tactical shots.

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.cxd5

The Exchange Slav used to be a coward's opening in the past, whereby weaker players tried to force a draw. But nowadays, thanks to the research of some top players, it can also be used as a very sharp weapon.

4...cxd5 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗f4 ♗f5



Things have developed symmetrically so far and this is the moment where White has the chance to break it with the following move.

7.♕b3

7.e3 e6 is considered to be the drawish line.

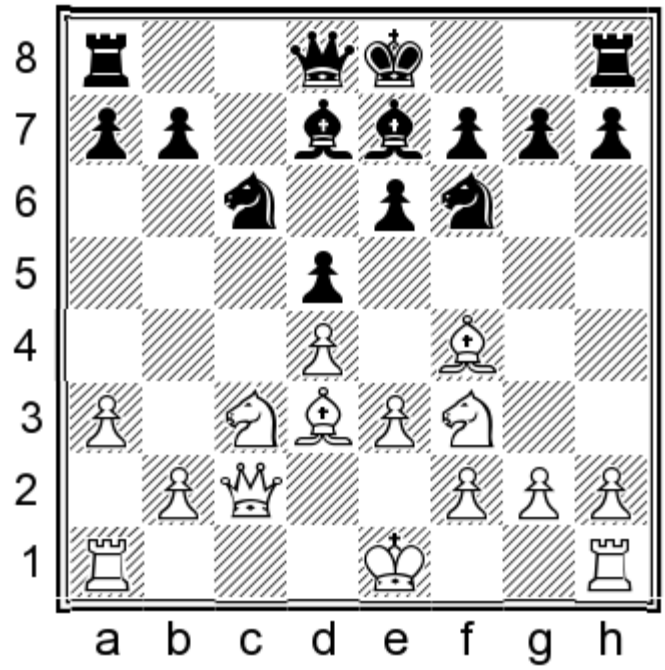
7...♘a5 8.♕a4+ ♗d7 9.♕c2

After forcing back the bishop, the queen occupies its diagonal. Many games have been played recently in this position, even at the highest level. Navara goes for one of the most critical lines.

9...e6 10.e3 ♗e7 11.♗d3 ♘c6

Knights at the edge of the board are never good and this re-grouping move also prepares for the upcoming maneuver... White now has to prevent the positional threat of grabbing the strong bishop with ♘b4.

12.a3



12.♕e2 is the alternative with the idea to have ♗b1 after ...♘b4, followed by sending the knight back with a3.

12...♘h5!

The knights are jumping to try to snag one of the bishops. The next move is very important for White too and is known from many different openings.

13.♗e5!

White is ready to give up his bishop, but only at the cost of a weakening with f6, or after ♘xe5 dxe5 the other knight on h5 remains completely misplaced at the edge of the board. 13.♗g3 could be met by 13...♘xg3 14.hxg3 g6 without having forced the f6 weakening, Black simply achieves a perfect structure.

13...f6!

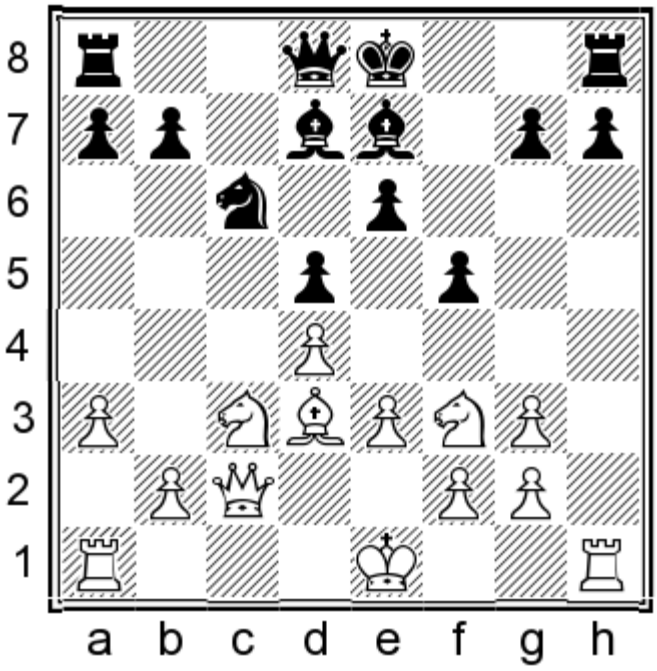
This move can only be played in connection with the next move. 13...♘xe5 14.dxe5 White is threatening with g4, trapping the knight. Black has to make some artificial maneuvers to rescue it with g6-♘g7, but the knight is going to be misplaced there too. Additionally White has gained a nice outpost for his own knight on d4.

14.♗g3

The greedy 14.♗xh7 fxe5 15.♕g6+ ♔f8 16.♕xh5 loses a piece after 16...exd4 17.exd4 ♗e8! 18.♕h3 ♗g6∓ It is never advisable to enter such a pin.

14...f5!

Black had to close the b1–h7 diagonal. It was wrong to include the grabbing of the bishop in view of 14...♘xg3?! 15.hxg3 f5



White can now explode the structure with 16.g4! g6 (*16...fxg4 17.♗xh7* and ♗g6 threatens.) 17.gxf5 gxf5 and once more: 18.g4! fxg4 19.♗xh7± with a strong attack. White is going to castle queenside.

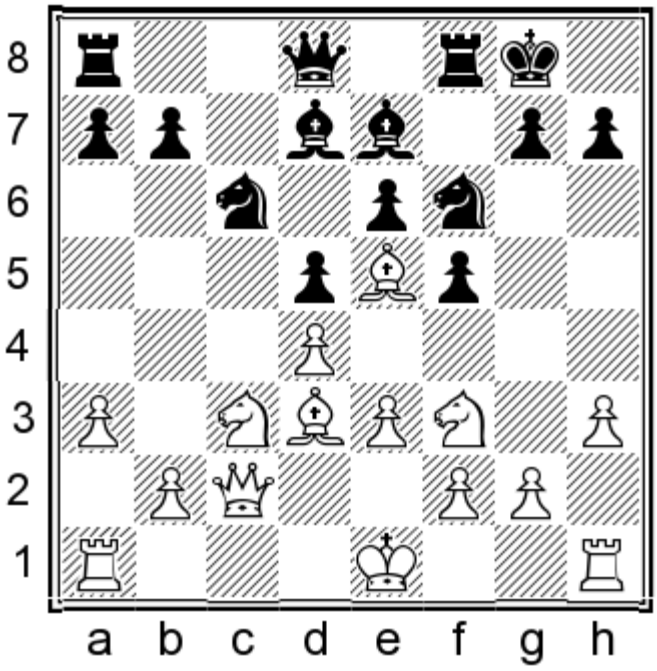
15.♗e5

White saves the bishop again, with the same idea as before. ♘xe5 could be met by dxe5 and the knight on h5 remains misplaced, while the other knight is going to be excellently placed on d4.

15...0-0 16.h3

A move with a double-purpose; White wants to launch an attack with g4 and also frees the h2 square for his bishop. We are actually still following some previous theoretical games.

16...♘f6



17.g4!?

The most critical continuation. Opening the h-file by taking on g4 looks very scary, while allowing gxf5 exf5 might leave the d5 pawn too loose. The game becomes very concrete now. 17.♗h2 ♖c8 18.0-0 is a rather positional alternative, but Black gets an equal game after 18...♘e4=

17...♘e4 18.gxf5 ♖xf5!

The top Ukrainian GM Pavel Eljanov introduced this move last year with very deep analysis behind it. Positionally this reaction is kind of suicidal because the e4 knight loses its outpost. However, as we know, chess is a concrete game and all direct lines prove that Black gets counterplay in any case.

19.♗xe4

This is the novelty, and definitely a prepared one. 19.♘xe4 was played previously. 19...♖xf3 20.♘d2 White has won a pawn, but after 20...♘xe5! 21.dxe5 ♖f8 22.♗xh7+ ♔h8 Black has excellent compensation. White cannot really continue his attack, while the black pieces are coming with ...♖c8, ...♗h4. White has serious problems finding some kind of shelter for his king. 23.♔e2 ♖c8 24.♕b1 d4! Eljanov opens the lines in front of the king. 25.♗d3 dxe3 26.fxe3 ♗e8! and ♗h5 was coming next, Black winning a few moves later.

19...dxe4 20.♕xe4

White has won a pawn, but he has lost his strong bishop. Black still needs to continue with direct and precise moves to get adequate compensation however.

20...♕b6!

Threatening to win a piece with ♕xb2 and Black also wants to bring his other rook to f8 to collect the f2 pawn.

21.b4

21.0-0-0 does not seem to work properly. Black gets a decisive attack after 21...♖c8! and now too many threats are hanging in the air. The main one is the simple ...♘xe5 and on ♘xe5 ♗xa3! and the c3 knight falls. White has no defence according to the machines.

21...♖af8

Bringing the last inactive piece into the game.

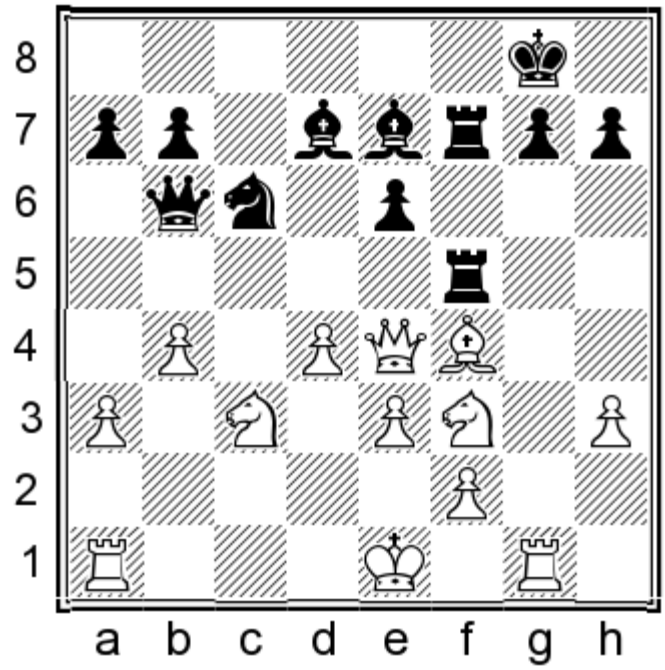
22.♖g1

This time it is White who needs to look for counterplay. Black's pieces are all prepared for landing a killer blow. Threats such as ...♘xb4 axb4, ...♗xb4 with a dangerous pin are on the cards.

22...♖8f7

If the f3 knight moves, Black could already take on e5, and f2 is also hanging. The next move suggests itself, to close the f-file.

23.♗f4



23.♖g3 leads to problems after 23...♕a6! (creating a double threat of ♕c4 and ♘xe5) ♘xe5 ♖xf2 ♘xf7 ♕f1 mate. 24.b5 also loses to 24...♕a5 25.♔d2 ♘xe5 26.dxe5 ♗xb5–+ with a crushing attack.

23...♘xb4!

A very tempting sacrifice, which was also kind of forced to gain counterplay. This is a move that we should play by intuition, as it is impossible to calculate until the end — but we can feel that Black is going to have something for the piece.

24.axb4 ♗c6

A human reaction, winning back the piece. The computer suggests 24...♗xb4 25.♔d2 and here the highly 'unhuman'

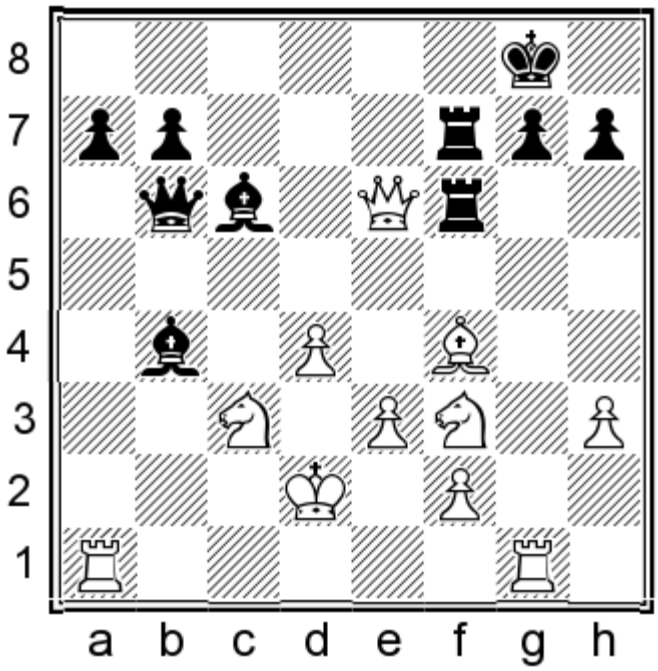
25...♖f8! followed by ...♖c8 with adequate compensation, but of course if a human plays like this nowadays, he will be accused of cheating!

25.♕xe6

25.d5 can be met by the intermediate move 25...♗xb4 and d5 is hanging next.

25...♕xb4?

This is actually a blunder. Navara did not want to enter an inferior endgame after ♗xf3 ♕xb6 axb6, therefore he escaped the pin first, but his queen could have ended up in trouble... 25...♗xb4! 26.♔d2 ♖5f6! was the way to play, when White needs to force a draw:



(*26...♗xf3* leads to a worse endgame after *27.♕xb6 axb6 28.♖a8+ ♖f8 29.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 30.♔d3* White has the better structure and the connected d- and e- passed pawns might become very strong. Also the doubled b-pawns are quite useless, but Black might still hope for salvation with his two bishops.)

27.♖xg7+!

(Other moves are risky, for instance 27.♕c8+ ♖f8 28.♕g4 ♖g6 29.♘g5

(*29.♕h5 ♗xf3 30.♕xf3 ♗xc3+ 31.♔xc3 ♖c8+ and* Black mates soon.)

29...h6 Black wins back the piece and continues attacking.)

27...♔xg7 28.♖g1+ All black moves lead to perpetual check: 28...♔h8

(*28...♔f8 29.♗h6+ ♖xh6 30.♕xh6+ ♔e7 31.♕g5+ ♔f8 32.♕g8+ ♔e7 33.♕g5*)

29.♗e5 ♗xc3+ 30.♔xc3 and this time it is Black who needs to force a draw by 30...♕a5+! White has nothing better than 31.♔b2 ♕b4+ 32.♔a2 ♕a4.

26.♔d2!

Centralizing the king! :) Of course it looks very scary, but the c3 knight becomes an extremely good defender of the king.

26...♕b2+

On 26...♗xf3 White suddenly traps the queen with 27.♖gb1! which would have been an unpleasant surprise...

27.♔d3 ♗xf3

The knight on c3 covers all the checks on e2, e4 and b5. White does not need to take any defensive measures and he can now focus on his own attack.

28.♖xg7+!?

This is also winning, but there was a much simpler way. 28.♖xa7 ♗f8 29.♖a8 and Black has no good defence against ♖xf8 ♔xf8 ♕c8 check. 29...♔h8 loses to 30.♗e5+– creating a new threat of ♖xf8 ♖xf8 ♗xg7 mate.

28...♔xg7

The following couple of moves are forced:

29.♖g1+ ♔h8 30.♗e5+ ♖xe5 31.♕xe5+?

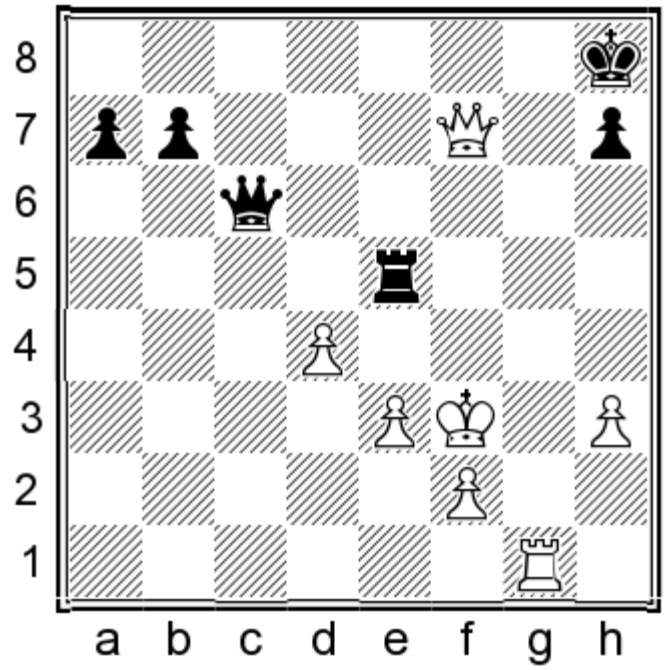
This is a mistake. White might still be winning, but that would have required a very brave king maneuver... 31.♕xf7 was the way to win. Black cannot defend against the mate on g8, so he must try to force a perpetual check with his remaining pieces. The c3 knight covers everything, therefore only a bishop sacrifice comes into consideration: 31...♗e2+ 32.♘xe2 ♕b5+ 33.♔d2 ♗b4+

(It is very important that after *33...♕b2+ 34.♔d1!+–* the f7 queen covers the b3 square, while other checks on the first rank are met by ♘c1.)

34.♘c3 ♗xc3+ 35.♔xc3 ♕a5+ and Black soon runs out of checks. 36.♔d3 ♕a3+

(*36...♕a6+ 37.♕c4+–*)

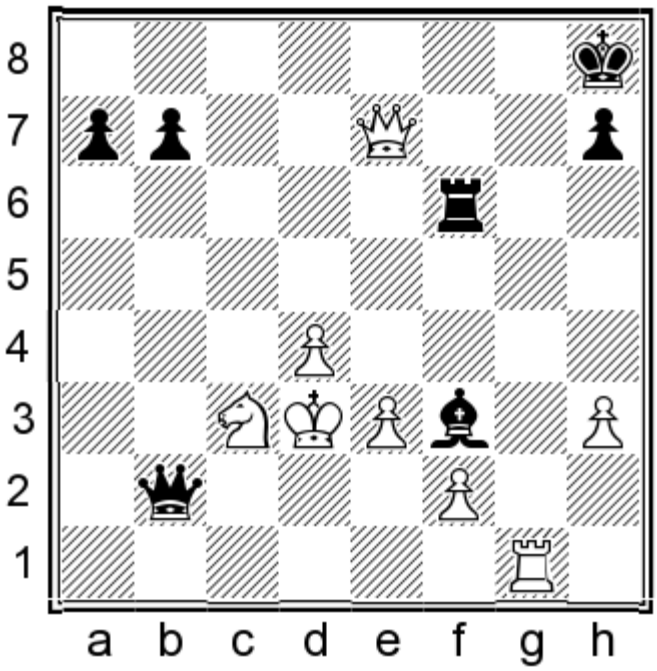
37.♔e2 ♕a6+ 38.♔f3 ♕c6+



39.♔g4! ♕e4+ 40.f4+– It is over now. No more checks for Black, and White is ready to pounce with ♕f8, dxe5 or ♕f6

followed by ♔h4 mate.

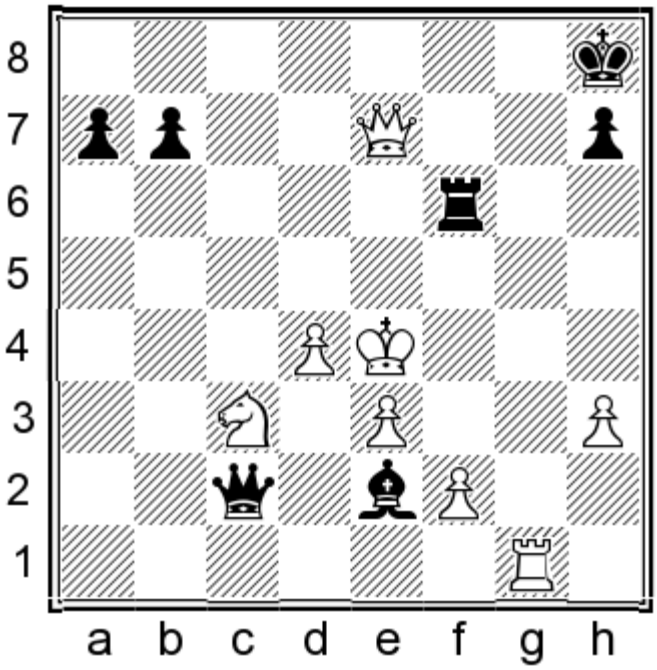
31...♖f6 32.♕xe7



The story is the same as in the 31.♕xf7 line. Black has no defence and he must try to force a draw with his remaining pieces. The next sacrifice is obligatory to allow new checks.

32...♗e2+! 33.♘xe2

Objectively a mistake, but no-one should blame Sokolov for this. It allows perpetual check. 33.♔e4 would still have given him an advantage, but who could go for such a line..? White was probably also low on time, because the game has been very tense and it is just impossible to go for a king walk. 33...♕c2+



34.♔d5! ♕f5+ (*34...♕b3+ 35.♔e5+–; 34...♗f3+ 35.e4 ♕b3+ 36.♔e5+–*) 35.♕e5 ♕d7+ 36.♔e4 After a nice slalom between the pawns White is winning in the end. It is important that Black cannot use his rook due to the pin, and the queen and bishop are not enough to create decisive threats. White still needs to play some only moves... 36...♕c6+ 37.d5 ♕c4+ 38.♕d4 ♗d3+ 39.♔e5 ♖f5+ Finally the rook joins in the attack, but suddenly (*39...♕c7+ 40.♔xf6+–*) 40.♔e6++– is check!! Black needs to trade queens, but then the endgame is lost due to the strong d-pawns.

33...♕b5+ 34.♔d2

34.♔e4?? ♕f5#;

34.♔c3?? ♖c6+

34...♕b2+ 35.♔d3

A draw was agreed in view of ♕b5. The difference to the 31.♕xf7 line can be seen after 35.♔d1 and now the b3 square is not covered and therefore Black can force the draw with 35...♕b3+! 36.♔e1 ♕b1+ 37.♔d2 ♕b2.

A great fighting game. There were some mistakes, but in such sharp positions only computers are able to play perfect chess!

1/2

GAME 32
M. Carlsen (2881)
A. Giri (2752)
2nd Norway Chess 2014 Stavanger NOR (1.3)
03.06.2014, [A34]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Carlsen is back in action in the Norway Super-Tournament. In the first round he tried very hard to squeeze out the full point, but Giri neutralized all his attempts with very precise defence.

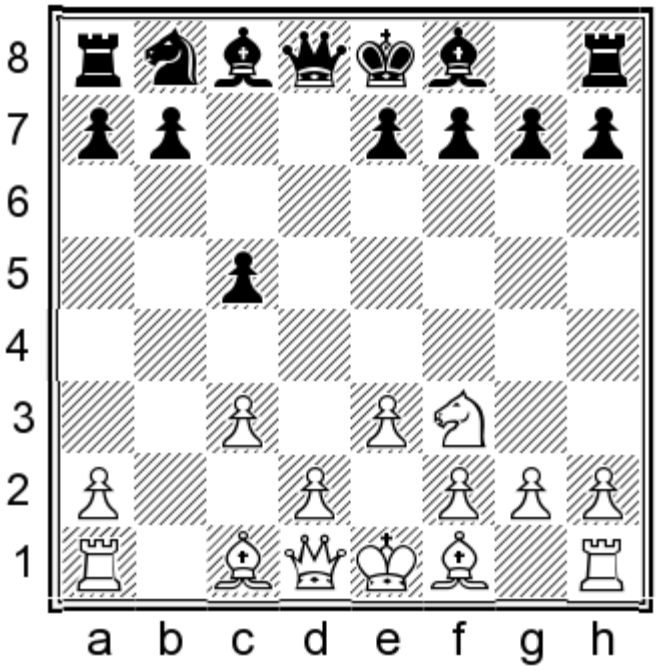
1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5

Giri is considered to be an excellent theoretician and has recently employed the Gruenfeld Defence, therefore Carlsen tries to drive the game onto some Anti-Gruenfeld territory.

5.e3 ♘xc3

5...g6 immediately can be met by some tricky lines, such as 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 7.♕b3 ♘xc3 8.♘e5! and White grabs the initiative.

6.bxc3



6...♕c7!?

A novelty on only the 6th move and a very clever one I must say! We can see the point in the 6...g6 line, which was played in almost all previous games. On 6...g6 7.h4!? is a very interesting idea with which Svidler beat Nepomniachtchi last year. With the text move, 6...♕c7, Black wants to exclude this possibility. (*7.d4* transposes to the game.)

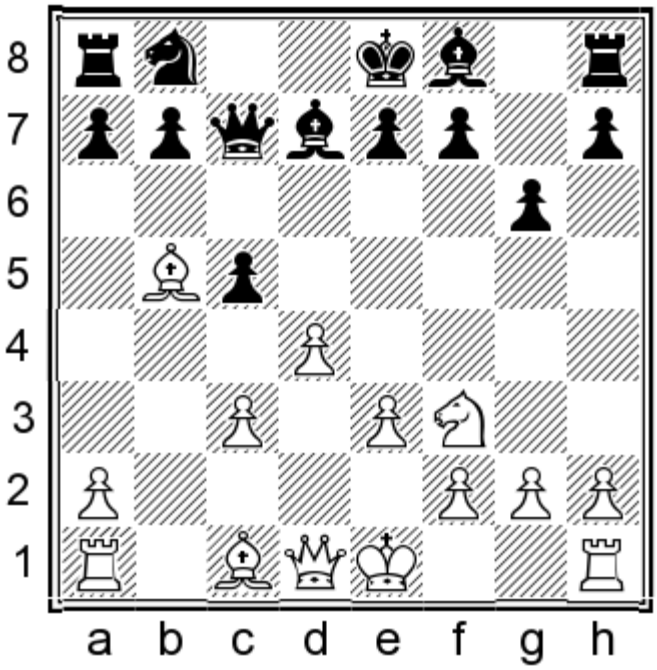
7.d4

Obviously the h4 move makes no sense now, because Black would develop his bishop on the other diagonal after occupying the center with e5. White had nothing better than d4, but now we are back to the Gruenfeld structure, which is what Black was aiming for.

7...g6 8.♗b5+

A standard idea in this structure; White would like to confuse the development of the black minor pieces.

8...♗d7



8...♘d7 is strongly met by 9.♗a3 when it is very hard to deal with the c5 pawn. 9...cxd4 (*9...b6* now loses to *10.♘g5!* Black has no good way to parry the ♕f3 double threat on f7 and a8. *10...♗b7 11.dxc5*±) 10.♕xd4 forces some artificial move like ♖g8 or f6, but neither of them is something what Black would want to play.

9.a4!

This move is connected to the previous check on b5 — White would like to keep his annoying bishop on b5. Black has two direct choices to deal with it, but neither of them is satisfactory. 9...♗xb5 10.axb5 is clearly a structural improvement for White, while a6 weakens the queenside a lot, and after retreating the bishop to d3 or e2 White could put the b7 and b6 squares under long-term pressure with ♗a3, ♕b3 and ♖b1.

9...♗g7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗a3!

Carlsen follows his opening strategy. He wants to achieve some benefits on the queenside. It is important to mention that in comparison to many Gruenfeld systems, the white pawn stands on e3 instead of e4, therefore it is much more difficult for Black to create some counterplay against the center, especially against the d4 pawn.

11...b6!

Black would like to keep the structure intact. 11...cxd4?! 12.cxd4 is clearly worse for Black. The a3 bishop becomes very strong now and the rook is coming to c1 with tempo, after which the queen does not have a good square.

12.dxc5!?

This move is always critical in this structure. It is a double-edged choice; it might work well if White manages to gain some benefits against the weak c5 pawn, but on the other hand if White cannot make any direct use of it, the opening of the g7 bishop only favors Black.

12...bxc5 13.♕d5

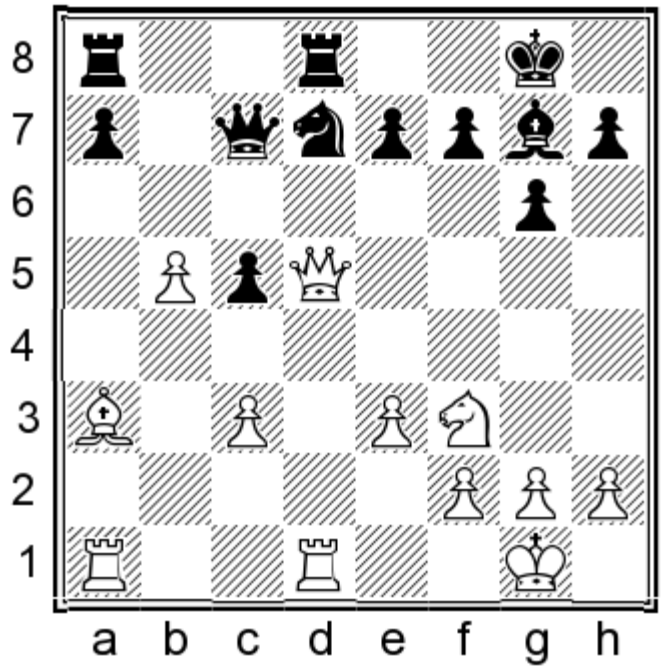
The consequent follow-up of capturing on c5. If the c5 pawn was traded for the one on c3, the opening of the c-file would clearly favor White as the rook could come to c1, creating many unpleasant threats against the queen.

13...♗xb5

Forcing a change in the pawn formation is already an achievement by White. Obviously the rook cannot be taken, because the queen gets trapped after ♗c6.

14.axb5 ♘d7 15.♖fd1 ♖fd8!

The most logical move, but it required good calculation.



The alternative was 15...♗xc3 16.♖ac1 ♘b6 but White gets a pleasant edge after 17.♕b3 ♗f6 18.♖xc5 ♕b7 19.♘e5! White would like to install his knight to c6, from where it attacks the e7 weakness and establishes control over both opened files (the c- and d-files). 19...♗xe5 20.♖xe5 Black might miss his bishop on the long diagonal and the e7 pawn is also weak. 15...♖ad8? is now strongly met by 16.♕c6!± and the c5 pawn is in big trouble.

16.♘g5

Carlsen feels that he must push hard for the advantage now, otherwise Black consolidates with ...♖ac8 and ...♘b6 and equalizes completely. On 16.♕c6 Black has 16...♖ac8 and White cannot strengthen his position.

16...e6 17.♕c6 ♕xc6

Giri chooses the direct way to play. The calm 17...♖ac8 was also possible. Giri was probably afraid that after provoking the e6 move, White might establish his knight on d6, but I doubt it could create real problems for Black. For instance: 18.♕xc7 ♖xc7 19.♘e4 (*19.♖ac1* was probably Carlsen's intention, but Black has no problems after *19...♖b8 20.c4 a6 21.bxa6 ♖a8 22.♖d6 ♗f8*= and taking back the a6 pawn next.) 19...♖b8! Leaving the pin. 20.♖ab1 f5 21.♘g5 (*21.♘d6? ♘b6*∓ The knight is actually trapped on d6!) 21...♖b6 and Black is fine.

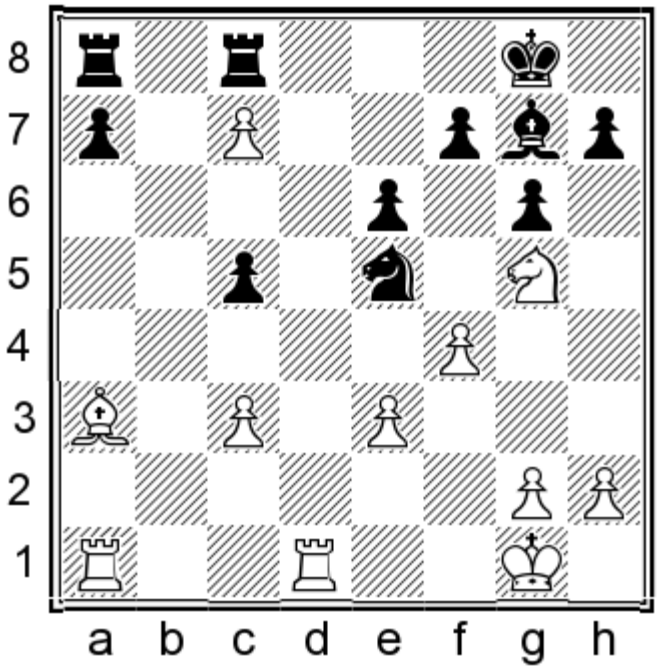
18.bxc6 ♘e5 19.c7!

The only attempt to cause Black further problems. White could have forced a draw by playing 19.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 20.c7 ♖c8 21.♗xc5 ♖xc7 22.♗xa7 ♖xc3=

19...♖dc8!

The only move!

20.f4

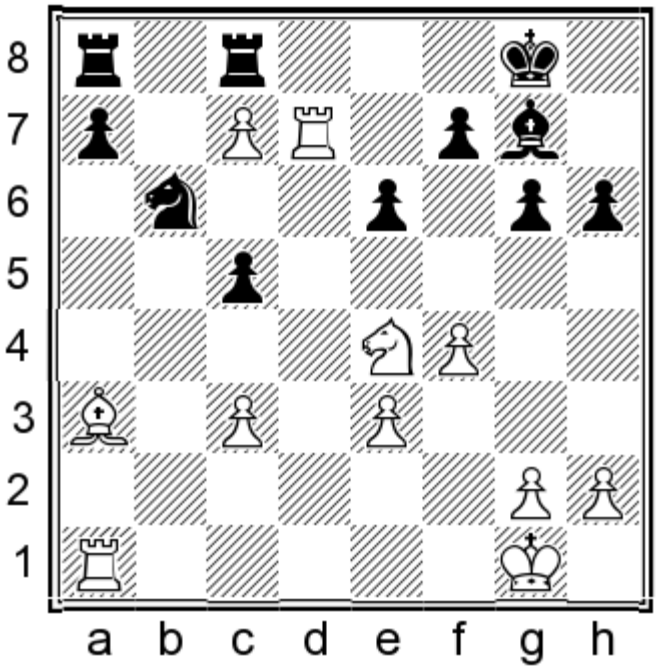


Carlsen had probably foreseen this position long ago and pinned his hopes on the invasion of his rook to d7, creating real threats against the f7 pawn. However, Giri also had something in mind to make this entire idea less effective.

20...h6!

A very strong intermediate move, which sends the knight away from its attack on the f7 pawn. 20...♘c4 21.♖d7± was problematic for Black.

21.♘e4 ♘c4 22.♖d7 ♘b6!



Black gets access to the c7 pawn. Carlsen once again finds the only way to fight for an advantage with a stylish exchange sacrifice.

23.♖ad1! ♘xd7 24.♖xd7

The rooks have no opened files and the c7 pawn remains very dangerous, therefore the sacrifice seems to be completely justified at first sight. ♘d6 is a deadly threat now, so the next move is an 'only' one!

24...♗f8! 25.c4

25.♗xc5 seems to lead to a forced draw after 25...♗xc5 26.♘xc5 ♔f8! (*26...a5* is wrong in view of *27.♘a4!*± and ♘b6 next!) 27.♘e4 ♔e8 The move was forced because of the ♘d6 threat and now White has no choice other than repeating moves with 28.♘f6+ ♔f8 29.♘e4= otherwise Black pushes a5...

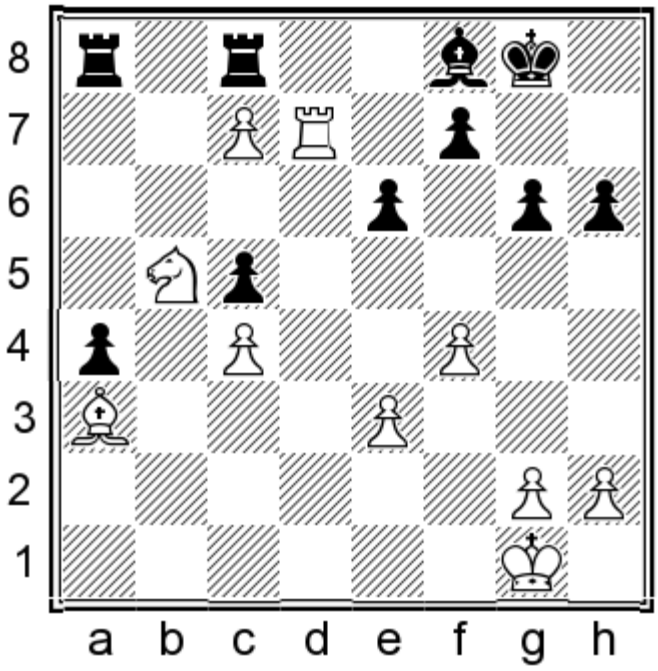
25...a5!

With the idea of ♖a7!

26.♘c3

Carlsen drives his knight to b5 to avoid the ♖a7 threat. 26.♘f6+ was tricky, but it does not bring anything in view of the correct reaction: 26...♔h8! (*26...♔g7?* loses to *27.♗b2!* as Black has no good way to parry the ♘d5-b6 manoeuvre. *27...♖a7 28.♗e5!*+– and Black is doomed.) 27.♖xf7 (Also after *27.♗b2 ♗g7* works well.) 27...♗g7 when Black is alright.

26...a4 27.♘b5



27...♖e8!

Suddenly the knight found itself far away from the f6 square and Giri finds a clever manoeuvre to neutralize the strong rook on d7. Whatever White plays, he will make final preparations with ...♖ac8, and then ...♖e7 is coming next.

28.e4 ♖ac8!

Of course not 28...♖e7? 29.♖xe7 ♗xe7 30.♘a7!

29.♘a7!

On 29.♔f2 Black can already play 29...♖e7! with the idea that after 30.♖d8? (*30.♖d2* it makes no sense to continue to play like this, since Black can always give back the exchange on c7.) 30...♖exc7!–+ wins for Black as the d8 rook is hanging.

29...♖a8 30.♘b5 ♖ac8 31.♘a7 ♖a8 32.♘b5

A correct draw! We can see that if someone wants to hold Carlsen, they must defend precisely for the entire game, without the slightest inaccuracy.

1/2

GAME 33
P. Svidler (2753)
M. Carlsen (2881)
2nd Norway Chess 2014 Stavanger NOR (8.4)
12.06.2014, [A27]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We don’t often see Carlsen missing big winning chances, but this time it is definitely the case — and once more against

Svidler (we still remember his game in the last Candidates, where he lost with White from a much better position). From the opening Black manages to reach a very nice position, followed by a great attack and finally -just when it seems as though White could already resign in a couple of moves — Carlsen makes a huge miscalculation which leads the game into totally unclear waters.

1.c4

1.c4 seems to be more fashionable again.

1...e5

And 1...e5 is probably the most played answer for Black right now.

2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♘f3 f5

This is quite a rare line, but personally I think it deserves a lot of attention. Black quickly shows strength in the center, which helps to develop ‘attractive’ play. 3...♘f6 is the main move.

4.d3

Maybe another option is 4.d4 e4 5.♘g5 with an interesting position.

4...♘f6 5.g3

This is also pretty standard development for White. The bishop is taking up its place on g2, from where he will control the a8-h1 diagonal.

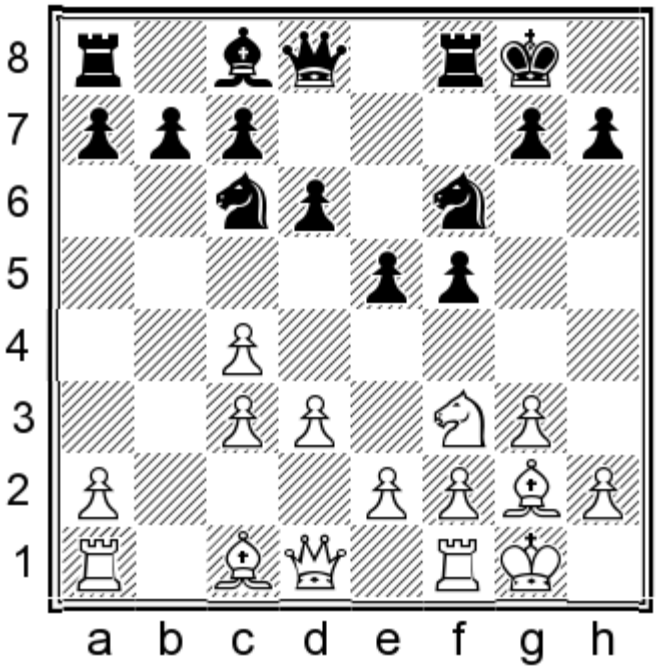
5...♗b4

Strategically interesting play. Black invests 2 moves to give up his bishop for the knight on c3, which seems to be strange. In fact, Black is trying to create a damaged pawn structure for White and on the other hand doesn’t want to lose time with g6-♗g7.

6.♗g2 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 d6

And already on move 7, we are in a fighting position which was clearly Carlsen’s goal.

8.0-0 0-0



The first moment of the game where White needs to spare a thought for his future plans. Black's idea is simple, to play ...♕e8-♕h5 and develop an attack on the kingside.

9.♖b1?!

A normal move, but it is hard to see Svidlers's idea, especially since he plays ♕b3 on the next move, which makes the move ♖b1 look very strange. The immediate 9.♕b3 looks much more logical to me. White's play should be connected with pushing c5.

9...♕e8

Black continues with the standard plan.

10.♕b3 b6!

A very strong move! Black stops White from his only play connected with c5. Of course 11.c5 doesn't work now because of 11...♗e6.

11.♘h4

What else to do?! It is hard to find a clear plan for White.

11...♘a5

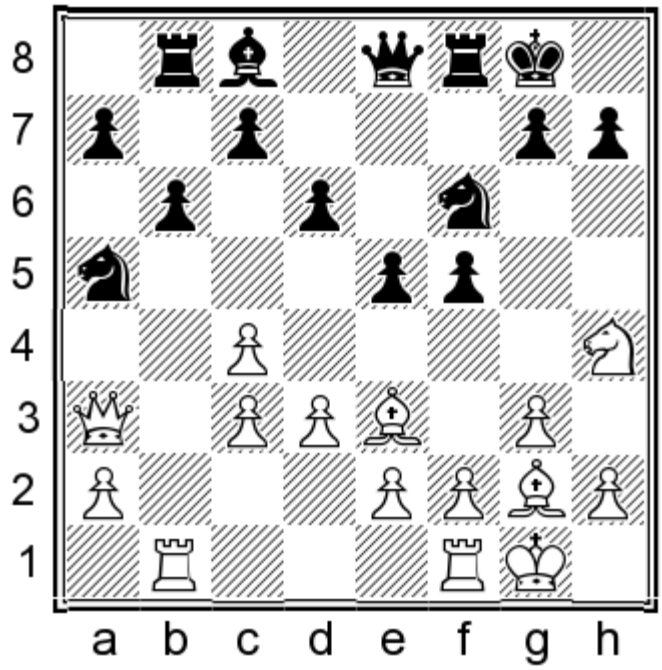
Black prepares to create a strong attack.

12.♕a3?!

Another move by Svidler which I can hardly explain. The white queen takes up a very bad position on a3 without obvious reasons. 12.♕c2 seems a lot more normal to me.

12...♖b8 13.♗e3

Once again Svidler seems not to be afraid of Black's play on the kingside and the only question is "why"?!



13...f4!

All of black pieces are nicely placed, so it is time to launch the action. With this pawn sacrifice Black brings almost every piece into the attack, which looks pretty deadly, especially since the white queen on a3 is totally out of the game.

14.gxf4

To take on f4 is already a must.

14...♕h5 15.♘f3 ♗h3 16.♗xh3 ♕xh3 17.♔h1

White is fighting not to get mated on the spot!

17...♖be8!?

In a position with a lot of good moves, Magnus continues bringing all his forces into the attack and doesn't care about temporary material losses.

18.♕b2

Defending against the exf4 threat. In case of 18.♖g1 exf4 19.♗xf4 ♖xe2 Black's position is just winning.

18...e4!

Black continues his great game-plan, completely outplaying his opponent. By playing 18...e4, Carlsen poses Svidler an extremely difficult question. If the knight has to move from f3, then the threat of playing ...♘g4 could be deadly, and in the event of taking on e4, the black knight from a5 joins the attack with ♘xc4. What a horrible position for White!

19.♘g5 ♕h5

Black wants to play ♘g4.

20.dxe4

20.♖g1 was no better, as after 20...exd3 21.exd3 h6 the knight has no squares of escape.

20...♘g4 21.♘f3 ♘xc4

The game seems to be at an end.

22.♕b3 ♖xe4

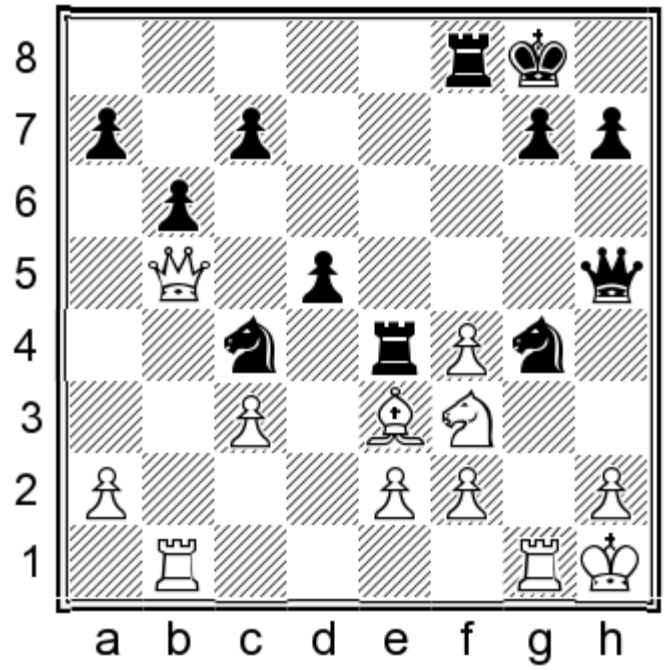
Material is equal and Black has a very strong attack...

23.♖g1 d5

Carlsen secures the last open diagonal, not allowing White any chances at all.

24.♕b5

It is hard to call Svidler's play 'fighting', more like waiting for the end of the game.



24...♖fxf4?

What a miscalculation by Carlsen! We don't often see the World Nr.1 blundering something, but this time it is clearly the case. One of the easy options for Black was to play 24...c5 and White is totally paralyzed. Another simple line is 24...♘cxe3 25.fxe3 ♘f2+ 26.♔g2 ♘h3 which should be enough for an easy win.

25.♗xf4

Probably when playing 25.♗xf4 Svidler still could not believe his luck.

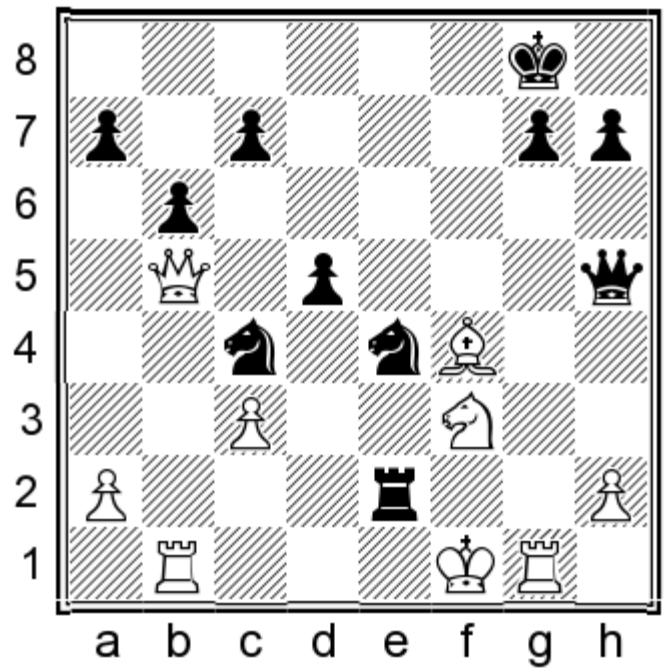
25...♘xf2+ 26.♔g2 ♖xe2

Now comes the move that Carlsen perhaps blundered with, or underestimated:

27.♔f1!

The only move, but it is more than White could expect having had a lost position. The game becomes very tricky now.

27...♘e4



27...♕xf3 already didn't work since after 28.♖g3 ♕e4 29.♕d7 only White can be better.

28.♖xg7+

Svidler finds his best chance to fight. After 28.♔xe2 ♘xc3+ 29.♔f2 ♘xb5 30.♖xb5 c5 we would reach quite a strange material situation, but one thing is clear here and that is that Black cannot be worse and is probably even better.

28...♔f8

After this move, Black will probably have no more chances to play for a win. Of course it looks dangerous, but maybe the best way to continue was still 28...♔xg7 29.♕d7+ ♕f7 30.♗h6+ ♔f6 In this very sharp position, it is not that simple to find moves for both sides, but it seems like Black has better chances overall.

29.♔xe2!

Since the mistake of 24...♖fxf4, Svidler keeps on finding the only moves to stay afloat.

29...♘xc3+

Black can do nothing better than win the white queen.

30.♔f2 ♘xb5 31.♖bg1

And suddenly we can see that the position has become totally unclear! From a material point of view, Black of course has a big advantage, but White has a very dangerous attack.

31...♘c3

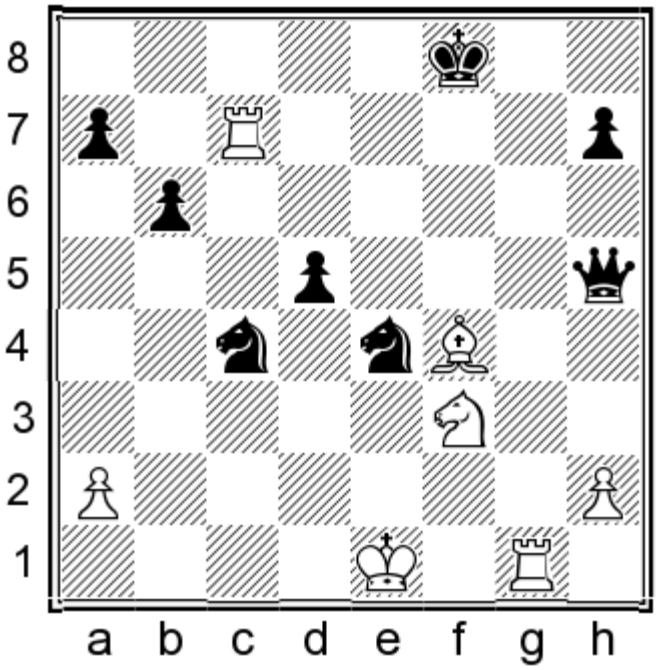
Black is trying to get the knight to e4.

32.♖xc7

Not a bad move, but why not shift the rook from g1 first to g7?! 32.♖g8+ looks more logical. 32...♔f7 33.♖1g7+ ♔f6 34.♖xc7 ♘e4+ 35.♔g2 and I think White would keep excellent practical chances to win the game. It is extremely difficult, as Black, to keep all the white threats in view.

32...♘e4+ 33.♔e1

In this highly-dangerous looking position for Black, Carlsen finds a great move:



33...♘c5!

A very strong move. Black wants to play ...♘d3 as well as ...♘e6. Of course not 33...♕xf3? 34.♗h6+ ♔e8 35.♖g8+ with mate.

34.♖c8+ ♔f7 35.♖c7+ ♔f8 36.♖c8+

Black can't avoid the perpetual check.

36...♔f7 37.♖c7+ ♔f8

We just saw a highly unusual game. Black totally outplayed White and it seemed like the game was over, but with a huge blunder and — later on — again missing some chances, Carlsen could even have found himself in trouble. Overall, chess is based on tactics, so it is never too late to blunder!

1/2

GAME 34
B. Savchenko (2596)
R. Rapport (2704)
Riga Tech Open A 2014 Riga LAT (9.1)
24.08.2014, [B07]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

Both players, Savchenko and Rapport, play very creative chess. In many cases both of them favor creative moves instead of practical ones, so we are going to witness one of the craziest games I have ever seen. After a total mess from move 14 until 40, the game finally ends in a perpetual check. A really fun game is ahead of us!

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5

Another game with the Philidor by Rapport.

4.♘f3 exd4

This was previously a popular line, but lately it has been very rarely played at GM level.

5.♘xd4 ♗e7 6.♗f4

This is one of the sharpest moves, and also one of the biggest main-lines.

6...0-0 7.♕d2

White wants to castle queenside as quickly as possible and start his attack on the kingside.

7...d5

and here starts the crazy line!

8.♘db5

This is, of course, all theory — the next moves for both sides are forced.

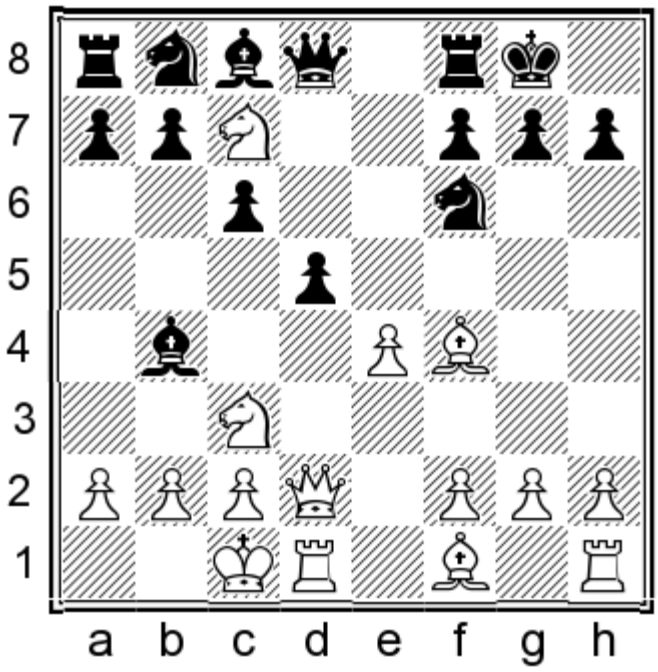
8...♗b4

Any other move is bad for Black.

9.0-0-0 c6!

Of course this is all known, but it is still a nice move by Black.

10.♘c7



10...♘xe4

Now White needs to choose between 2 moves.

11.♕d4

I am not sure at all if this is the best square. 11.♕e3!? is at least an interesting option.

11...♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♕e7

and the craziness is starting! Black can't save the rook on a8, but of course he gains strong compensation. White's king's position is open and the knight on e4 is a monster piece.

13.♖d3

It is hard to find another defence against the threat of ....♕a3.

13...♗e6

A very nice move. Black not only develops his pieces, but also prepares to play ...c5 next.

14.♘xa8 c5

As we can clearly see, the position is very sharp and extremely hard to evaluate!

15.♕e3

15.♕a4 is not good as after 15...♘xf2 White is losing material.

15...c4

Of course, chasing the rook away from d3 and getting ready to play ...♕a3.

16.♖d4 ♕a3+ 17.♔d1

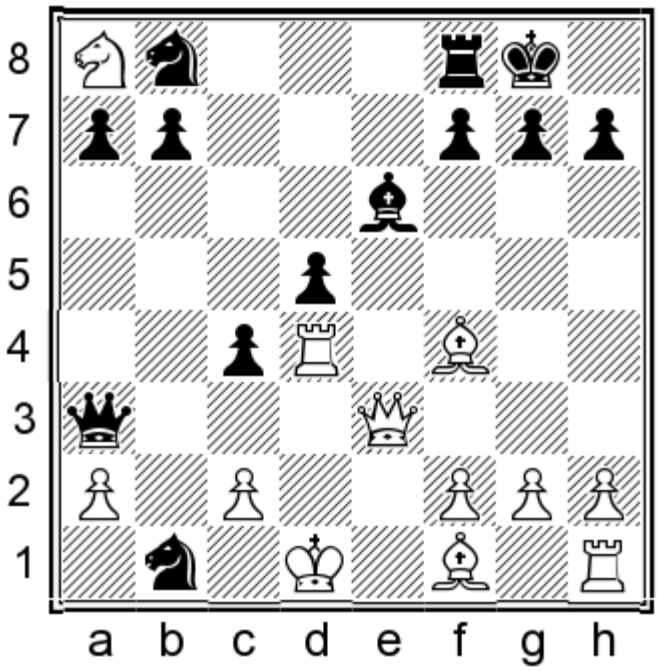
White already had nothing better.

17...♘xc3+ 18.♔d2

This is also the only move for White. 18.♔e1 is just bad due to 18...♘c6! with a double attack on d4 and a8.

18...♘b1+ 19.♔d1

Black can already force a draw after 19...♘c3, but the position looks very promising and, of course, you don't need to ask Rapport twice if he wants to play for a win...



19...♘c6!

The strongest move in the position. Black is using the fact that White cannot exchange queens and therefore wins back some material.

20.♘c7

After 20.♕xa3 ♘xa3 21.♖d2 ♖xa8 Black's position should be close to winning.

20...♘xd4 21.♕xd4

If we take a fresh look at the position, Black is still some material down but he continues to have a strong attack — which gives him clearly more than just compensation.

21...♘c3+

Very logically played: the knight does not belong to b1.

22.♔d2 ♘e4+ 23.♔e2 ♕xa2

Black already has 3 pawn for the piece and the white king is still on the run.

24.♔f3

It seems like White has nothing better.

24...♕a3+?!

What a strange decision by Black! Much more logical is 24...♕xc2 (why not take such an important pawn?!) 25.♘xd5 White is trying to at least stay in the game. 25...♗xd5 26.♕xd5 and now Black has the very strong and safe 26...♖e8 (♕xf2 is the threat now). 27.♕d4 b5 Black has 3 pawns for the piece, the white pieces are badly placed and the king is on f3, so I think Black's position should be close to winning.

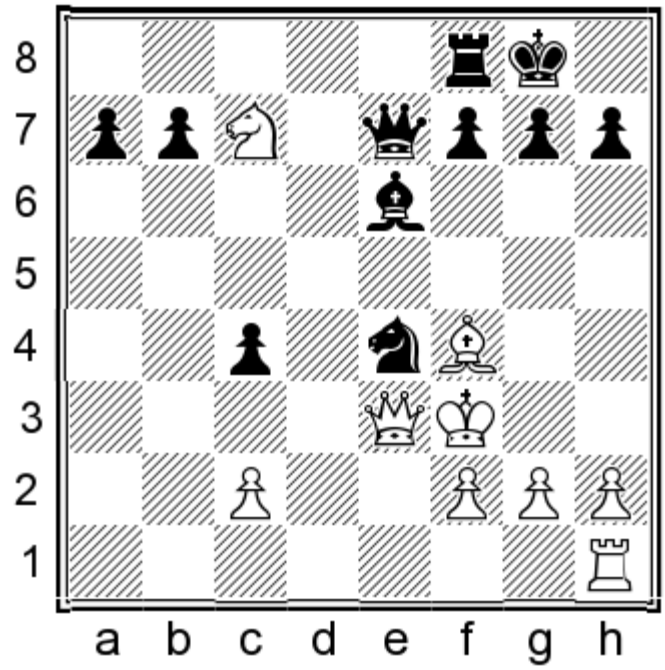
25.♕e3 ♕e7

and here comes the move that Rapport probably underestimated:

26.♗xc4!

Very nice calculation by White, but anyhow it is clear that he needed to do something with the bishop on f1.

26...dxc4



This also seems to be the best for Black. 26...♕h4 doesn't bring anything since after 27.♔e2, the white king is, rather strangely, quite safe.

27.♔xe4

Wow! What a position. The white king sits in the center of the board, but there seems like there is no mate! 27.♕xe4 was of course losing: 27...♗g4+ 28.♔e3 ♕a3+! 29.♔d4 ♖d8+ with an easily winning position for Black.

27...g5

An interesting try, but this move is too dangerous! There are soooo many interesting moves for Black that it is really hard to choose a continuation, especially during a practical game where Rapport was definitely thinking that he must be winning somehow. After 27...♕f6 28.♕d4! seems to hold things together for White. Maybe Black could have tried 27...♗g4+ 28.♔d4 ♕b4 29.♘d5 ♕a4, again with a very crazy position.

28.♗g3

A cool and good reply by Savchenko.

28...♕f6

On 28...f5+? 29.♔f3 and now it is White who is winning.

29.♗e5?!

A very human reply, but not the best. 29.♕d4 looks very strong. 29...♕f5+ 30.♔e3 ♕xc2 Although White gave up the pawn on c2, the rook is finally getting into the game. 31.♖d1 and I think White is already the one with big ambitions here.

29...♕f5+

After 29...♗f5+ 30.♔d4 ♖d8+ 31.♔c3 ♕e7 32.♖a1 White is clearly better because the king on c3 actually feels quite safe.

30.♔d4 f6

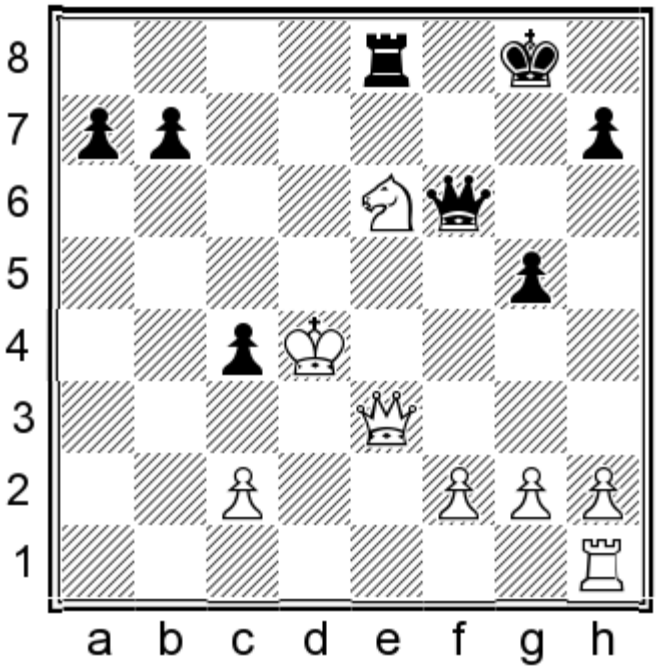
The position remains very sharp, but slowly White is taking over. The white king only needs to reach the c3 square to give him a clear advantage.

31.♘xe6!

Savchenko is playing a great game in a complicated position, but a move like ♘xe6 is actually very logical, as fewer black pieces means fewer mating chances.

31...♖e8 32.♗g3?

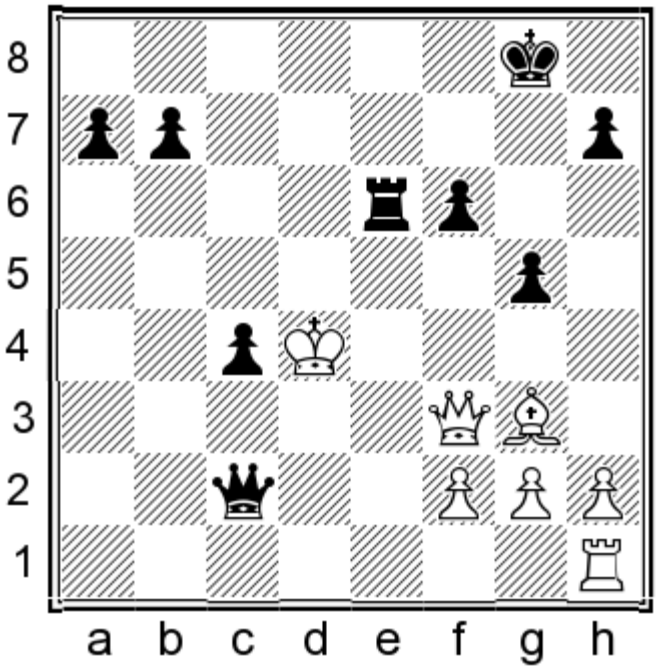
White misses a fantastic win. 32.♗xf6! leads to victory. 32...♕xf6+



33.♔d5 The king is a strong piece! On 33...♕f5+ 34.♔d6 Black is out of checks, which means “game over”. The white king on d6 holds everything together... what a funny position!

32...♖xe6 33.♕f3 ♕xc2

and we are back to a very complicated position...



34.♕xb7!

In an extremely complex position and being short on time, Savchenko continues playing excellently. White’s position looks very dangerous again with the king on d4, but Black doesn’t have anything more than just a draw...

34...♕d2+

Black needs to give a check and the move in the game leads to a draw by force, but Black doesn't seem to have anything more.

35.♔c5 ♕a5+

White also needs to be very careful with his king moves. One mistake and the game could be over immediately.

36.♕b5

and now it is White's turn to play for a win... 36.♔d4 ♕d2+ with a draw.

36...♕a3+!

The right check! Black forces White to take the c4 pawn to open up the white king even further.

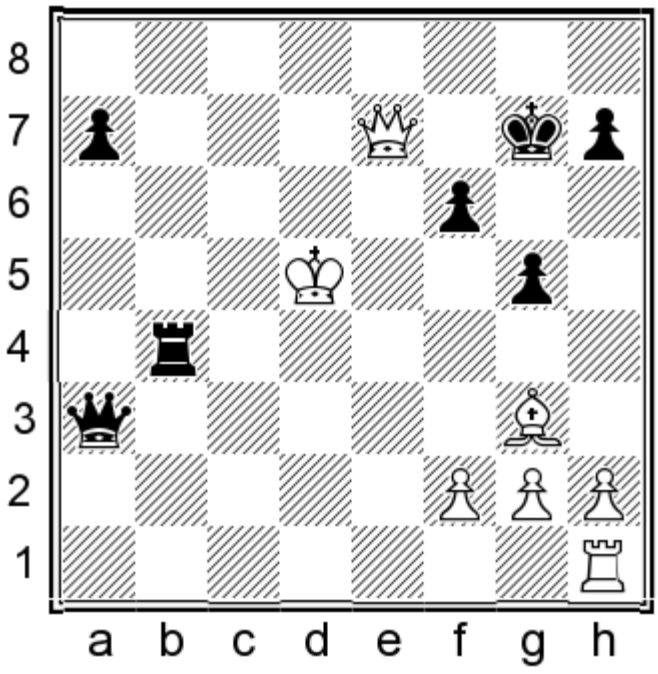
37.♔xc4 ♖e4+

Finally the 'useless' rook on e6 enters the game.

38.♔d5 ♖b4

Once again the best move. Both players are handling the time-pressure perfectly, playing a very high level of chess.

39.♕e8+ ♔g7 40.♕e7+



40...♔g6

So time-trouble is over and the question is, does White have anything more than a perpetual check?!

41.♕e8+ ♔g7 42.♕d7+

Savchenko doesn’t find anything — because there is just nothing. It’s not possible to play for a win with a completely exposed king on d5-even a piece up.

42...♔g6 43.♕e8+ ♔g7 44.♕e7+ ♔g6 45.♕e8+

What a game! Tremendous!

1/2

GAME 35
M. Vachier-Lagrave (2768)
M. Carlsen (2877)
Sinquefield Cup 2014 St Louis, Mo (1.1)
27.08.2014, [C45]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We will now look at a very high level game with a lot of interesting tactical ideas and great fighting spirit. Already after the opening things are very complicated, the position being totally unclear. At the point when it seems a draw should be the natural outcome, Carlsen tries to complicate matters and the position becomes unclear again! As with many fighting games, it all ends in a perpetual check.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4

It appears as though Maxime has had enough of the Berlin and decides to check out Carlsen in the Scotch.

3...exd4 4.♘xd4 ♗c5

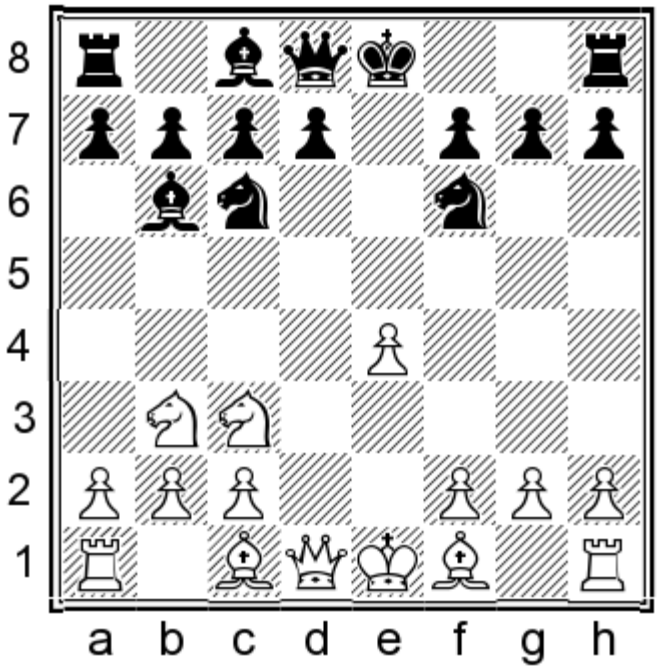
This is not the mainstream reply. 4...♘f6 is clearly the move that currently questions the Scotch as an opening, with chances for a White advantage.

5.♘b3

Clearly the best try for White, as all other moves lead to a comfortable position for Black.

5...♗b6 6.♘c3 ♘f6

Now the game becomes very sharp.



6...♘ge7 is the more solid reply, followed by 0-0 and f5.

7.♕e2

White's idea is mainly to play e5 next, but ♗g5 and 0-0-0 could be another possible option.

7...a5

This is not a novelty either and was clearly analysed by Carlsen beforehand.

8.e5

The fun starts now!

8...0-0

Black had no choice.

9.exf6

and here comes the key idea behind the a5 move.

9...a4!

Very nice. The white knight has no other move from b3 than to d2, and of course it doesn't work because of ♖e8.

10.♘d5!

This is clearly the most dangerous move for Black. White gives back the piece, but is preparing dangerous attacking possibilities against the black king because of the f6 pawn.

10...♖e8

Before taking the piece back on b3, Black includes the ♖e8 move because it is a very useful move for the future anyway.

11.♗e3 axb3 12.♕g4

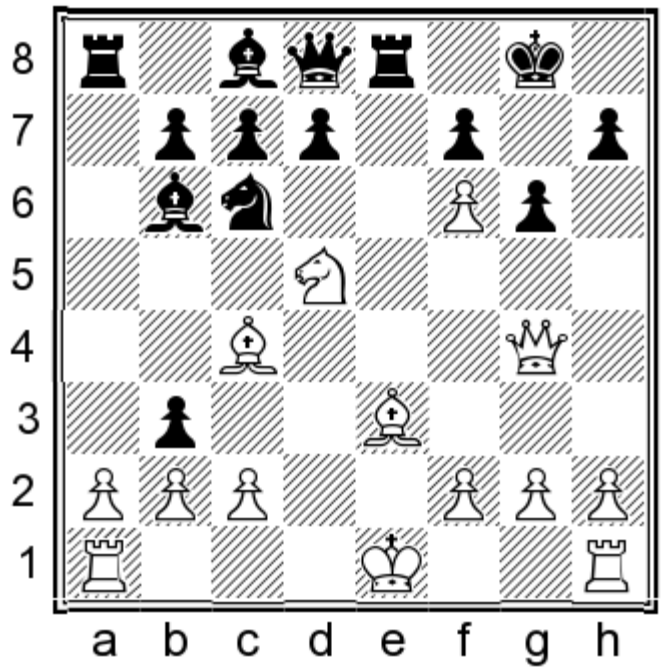
Of course White doesn't miss the chance of playing ♕g4.

12...g6

Now the question is what to play next?!

13.♗c4!

Excellent play by White! Who cares about a pawn in a such a rough position? White is not only preparing to play 0-0 and finally get the king out of the center, but ♕f4-♕h4 could also be a dangerous threat now.



White could go very wrong with 13.cxb3? ♗a5+ 14.♔d1 ♖e5 and there is no good way to hold the knight on d5, e.g.15.♗c4 b5 and Black is already winning.

13...♘b4!

What a fantastic move from Carlsen! 13...bxc2 would lead to a dangerous position for Black. 14.0-0 ♗xe3 15.fxe3 Now of course Black has a couple of moves, but the idea of playing ♘e7 is always very dangerous. 15...d6 16.♕h4 ♔h8 17.♕h6 ♖g8 18.♘e7 and White seems to be better.

14.♘xb4

White had to take on b4.

14...d5 15.♕f4 dxc4

White only has one idea left, but it's a very powerful one — to play ♕h6 at an opportune moment.

16.0-0

This move is simply the best: White needs to play for the initiative. 16.♖d1 doesn't work because after 16...bxc2 17.♖xd8 the bishop on e3 is pinned, so 17...c1=♕+

16...bxc2 17.♘d5

The only move for White, but a strong one! Of course Black can't take the knight because of ♕h6.

17...♖e6!

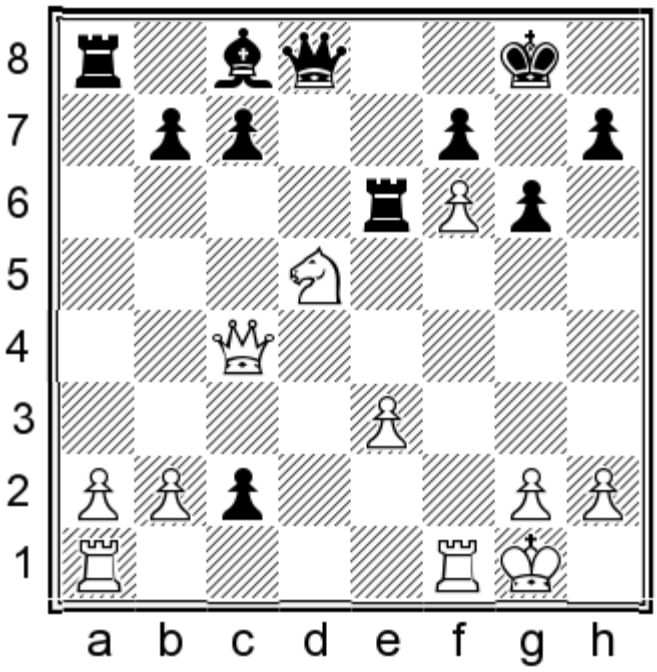
An excellent defensive move by Carlsen. While I was watching the game live, it reminded me very much of a game between 2 computers, as all moves of both players were just perfect, which shows how precise and accurate the calculation of the very best players is.

18.♕xc4

Again the best as ♗xb6 was already a threat. White doesn't have any advantage after 18.♘e7+ ♔h8 19.♗xb6 ♖xb6 20.♖ac1 and now the simplest for Black is 20...♗f5 with an equal position.

18...♗xe3 19.fxe3

Black's position looks very dangerous. ♘e7 is a threat and material is equal, so if Black doesn't have anything direct then things could go very well for White.



19...b5!

The only move for Black!

20.♕c5

20.♘e7+?? of course loses to 20...♕xe7

20...♗b7

The black bishop finds a role on b7 now, which gives Black quite some counterplay.

21.♘e7+

Now Black has to pick between 21...♔h8, and 21...♖xe7 — which leads to a pretty obvious draw.

21...♔h8

What fighting spirit from Carlsen, who clearly chooses to play for a win. 21...♖xe7 22.fxe7 and now the move which is hard to miss is 22...♕d2 White doesn't have anything better than to force a draw after 23.♖f2 (*23.♕g5* is almost losing after *23...♖e8* followed by ♖xe7.) 23...♕d1+ 24.♖f1 ♕d2 and the point is split.

22.♕xc2 ♖aa6

Black's idea is to play "around the white knight" with all the pieces, but it is of course a very dangerous strategy with such a bad king on h8.

23.♖ac1

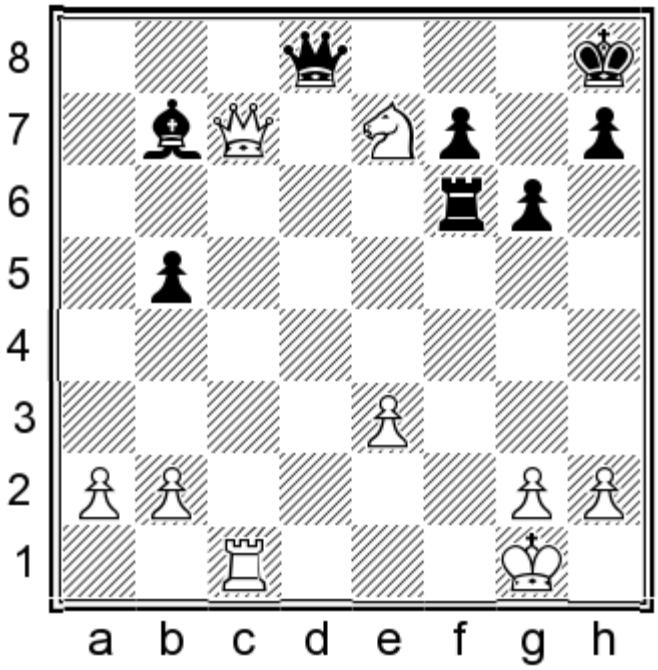
What can be more logical than to attack c7? 23.♖ad1 would lead to an unclear position. 23...♖ad6 and for example after 24.a3, it is very hard to say who is better here but the position should probably be around equal.

23...♖xf6

From now on things are forced. The pawn on f6 needs to be taken.

24.♖xf6 ♖xf6 25.♕xc7

What a crazy position not at all easy to play for a human, but both our actors seem to calculate not much worse than a strong engine, and simply play a near-perfect game!



25...♕d2?!

Perhaps the first mini-mistake of the game. 25...♕d3! was the move that would give Black some chances to play for a win. 26.♕c3 (Now it is already very bad for White, because the Queen on d3 is protecting the f5 square. *26.♕b8+ ♔g7 27.♕g8+ ♔h6 28.♕f8+ ♔h5 29.♖c5+ g5 30.♖xg5+ ♔h4!* first Black needs to provoke the g3 move. *31.g3+ ♔xg5 32.♕g7+ ♖g6 33.♕e5+* and here comes the difference to the line in the game: *33...f5! 34.♕f4+ ♔f6* and Black is winning.) 26...♕xc3 and because of the terrible position of the white knight on e7, Black is a bit better here.

26.♕b8+

Now we end up in a forced line which leads to a draw.

26...♔g7 27.♕g8+ ♔h6 28.♕f8+ ♔h5 29.♖c5+

All these moves are forced.

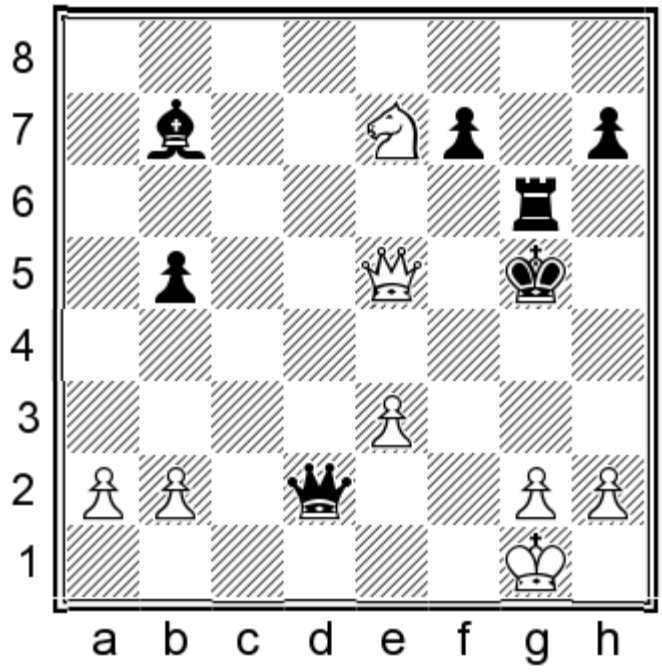
29...g5 30.♖xg5+

White has nothing better because of the deadly threat ♕xg2.

30...♔xg5 31.♕g7+ ♖g6

Black can’t do anything to stop White from delivering the perpetual check either.

32.♕e5+



32...f5

Again all the moves are ‘correct’.

33.h4+

White had many ways to force a draw and this is one of them.

33...♔h5 34.♕xf5+ ♔h6 35.♕f8+ ♔h5 36.♕f5+ ♔h6 37.♕f8+ ♔h5 38.♕f5+

We just saw a really fantastic game with a lot of great tactical motifs and a very spectacular finish with a perpetual check. An especially high level game!

1/2

GAME 36
D. Svetushkin (2580)
Y. Kryvoruchko (2708)
TCh-ESP Div Honor 2014 Linares ESP (3.1)
06.09.2014, [B40]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

An extremely exciting game was played in the Spanish Team Championships. It was not perfect, but both players found remarkable ideas in a very difficult middle-game!

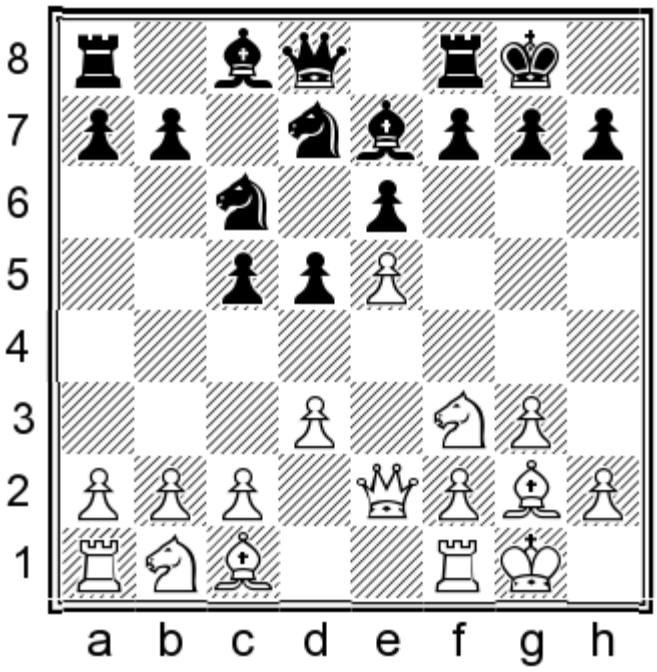
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6

Black is ready to play the sharp Paulsen variation of the Sicilian, but White prefers to keep the position closed and aims for a maneuvering fight.

3.d3 ♘c6 4.g3 d5 5.♕e2

Another setup is 5.♘bd2, with the same idea to avoid the trade of the queens after dxe4. Usually Black plays the same as in the 5.♕e2 line. 5...♘f6 6.♗g2 ♗e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.e5 ♘d7 9.♖e1 with an attacking plan on the kingside with ♘f1, h4 and so on, while Black builds up his counterplay on the queenside with ...b5-b4, ...a5.

5...♘f6 6.♗g2 ♗e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.e5 ♘d7



9.c4!?

This is the difference to the 5.♘bd2 setup. White is still able to develop his knight to c3 and he tries to exert pressure on the d5 pawn to force Black to decide what to do with it. After both ...d4 and ...dxc4, White gains the e4 square for the knight and the diagonal of the g2 bishop opens up.

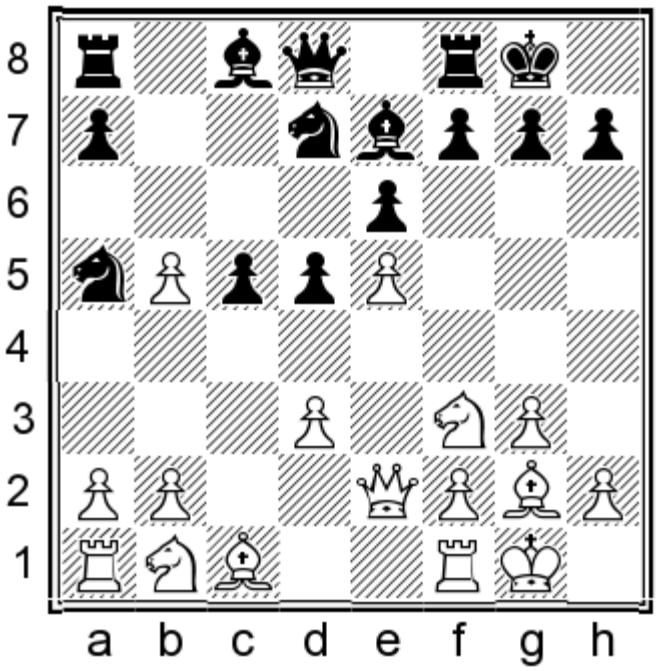
9...b5!?

A very interesting attempt to fight for the center at the cost of a pawn. This reminds me of the Volga Gambit! Recently some high level games continued with 9...d4 10.h4 ♔h8 11.♗f4 f5! and Black locked the kingside in Svidler-Karjakin 2014. The point of the previous ♔h8 move was that after 12.exf6 gxf6 13.♕xe6 is not with check and Black can play 13...♘de5

10.cxb5!

White chooses the right way to accept the sacrifice. He could also have won the pawn with 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♘c3 with a double attack, but then Black's compensation should be enough after 11...♘b6 12.♘xb5 a6 13.♘c3 ♗g4 and it is not so easy to deal with the threat of ♘d4.

10...♘a5



11.♘fd2!

An excellent move! At first sight it is not easy to see its point, but soon it all becomes clear. Black's idea is to undermine the queenside with ...a6 (as in the Volga Gambit) and after bxa6 ♗xa6 with very strong compensation on the queenside, as the d3 pawn might become very weak. Svetushkin correctly realized that the a6 move should be answered by a4 and White should save his b5 pawn at any cost to avoid this very unpleasant compensation. Therefore he brings back his knight to d2 (to avoid ...♘b3 after a4) and prepares to strengthen the b5 pawn with his other knight from a3! 11.♕c2!? was also possible with the same idea to control the b3 square and play a4 and ♘a3 next.

11...a6 12.a4!

12.bxa6 ♗xa6∓ is already better for Black. ...♘c6 threatens not only e5 but also ...♘b4. This is exactly what Black was playing for when he pushed ...b5!

12...♘b6

with the clear plan to win the b5 pawn with ...♗d7. The computer suggests 12...♕b6 13.♘a3 ♗b7 but in this case I don't see how Black should strengthen his pressure on the b5 pawn to be able to seize the initiative on the queenside?

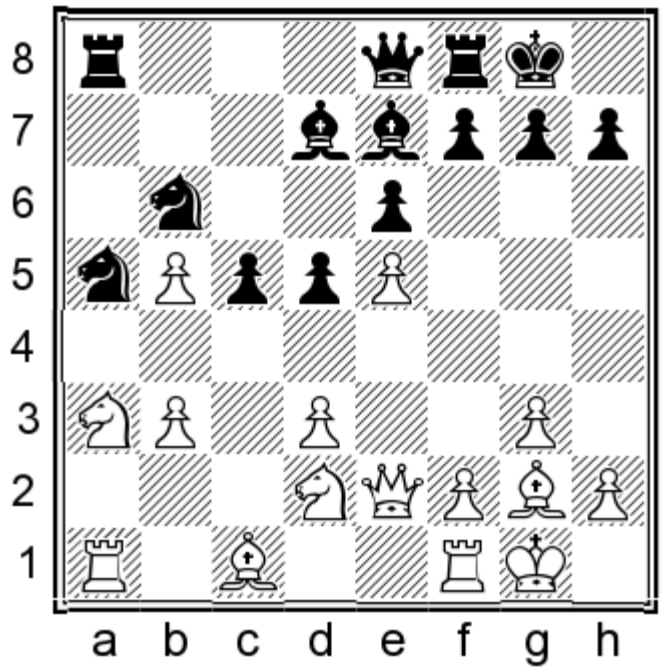
14.♖e1

13.b3

White's intention is to play ♗b2-c3 and clarify the situation on the queenside, therefore Black must act urgently before White can consolidate.

13...axb5 14.axb5 ♗d7 15.♘a3 ♕e8?!

This is logical, but Kryvoruchko probably missed his opponent's next move.



Black should have played 15...♘c8! with the same idea of winning back the pawn after ...♘a7. The difference is that after 16.♘ac4 the a5 knight is not hanging (compared to ♕e8) 16...♗xb5 is equal.

16.♘ac4!!

A brilliant positional piece sacrifice! Black has no choice, he must accept...

16...dxc4 17.bxc4

White simply recaptures. He already has two pawns for the piece, but more important is the misplacement of almost all the black pieces. The g2 bishop turns out to be a beast on the long diagonal, and it cannot be neutralized by the one on d7. Black finds a clever idea to save the a5 knight, but this creates new problems...

17...♘c6!?

A nice tactical idea! On 17...♖a7 White can choose between some tempting options: 18.♘e4 I like this the most. As long as Black is suffering on the queenside, White is playing for mate like as happened in the game, with ♗b2 and ♘f6. (*18.♘b3* is also good to win back some material. *18...♘xb3 19.♖xa7* followed by ♗b2 to get rid of the d4 knight and the rook on the seventh rank combined with the strong bishop on g2 paralyzes Black completely.)

18.♗b2!

Svetushkin prevents the centralization of the c6 knight and continues playing intuitively, using the fact that despite Black solves the problem of one of his poor pieces (the a5 knight) there are still many more left. 18.♖xa8 allows Black to have a centralized knight following the intermediate move 18...♘d4!

18...♖xa1 19.♖xa1 ♘b4

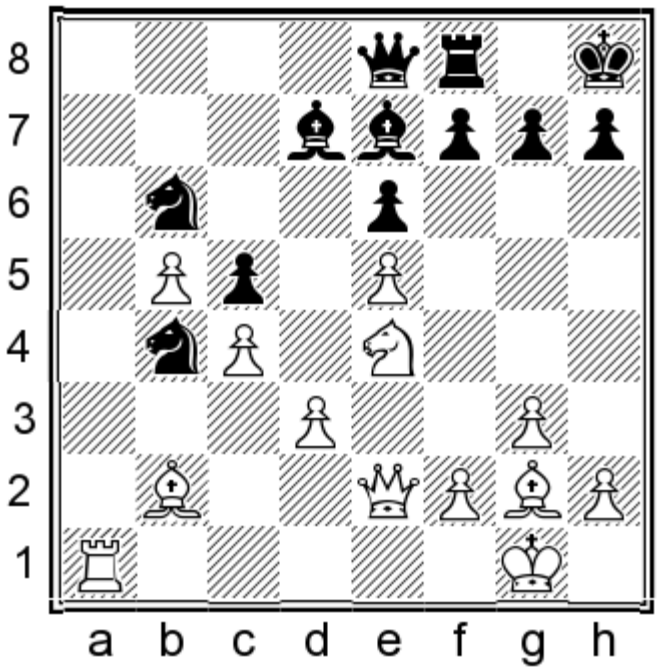
In the event of 19...♘d4 20.♗xd4 cxd4 21.♘b3 White will be fine, even materially after taking on d4, but the march of the queenside pawns looks even more scary from Black's point of view.

20.♘e4!

White plans another sacrifice on f6! Kryvoruchko knows exactly what his opponent is thinking about, but his poor pieces don't allow him to find an adequate defense against the coming attack.

20...♔h8

Black evades the threatened check on f6, and also from gxf6 exf6 ♕g4-♕g7 mate.



I tried to defend with 20...f5 but White gets a winning advantage after 21.exf6 gxf6 22.d4! cxd4 23.♗xd4 ♘c8 24.b6+– Black's pieces are simply too bad.

21.♘f6!

Consequent and strong! Svetushkin sees that the poor placement of the black pieces should allow him to execute a decisive blow.

21...♕d8!

The only move! The knight could not be taken as after 21...gxf6 22.exf6 ♗d6 23.♕h5!+– when ♗e4 comes next with an inevitable mate on h7.

22.♕h5

It was actually even stronger to start with 22.♗e4! The difference is that after 22...♗xf6 23.exf6 g6 24.♖a7+– when White is threatening ♕e3, attacking the c5 pawn and dropping the queen into h6. Often ♗xg6 will also just win, using the fact that fxg6 f7 and hxg6 ♕h6 are both mate. The two bishops are killing.

22...♗xf6

22...gxf6 is refuted by 23.exf6 ♗xf6 24.♗e4!+–

23.exf6 g6 24.♕h6

Unfortunately for White 24.♕xc5 does not work because of 24...♘xd3 when Black gets rid of the b2 bishop.

24...♖g8 25.♗e4

Protecting the d3 pawn. Now White even has some slow ideas like h4-h5 in mind.

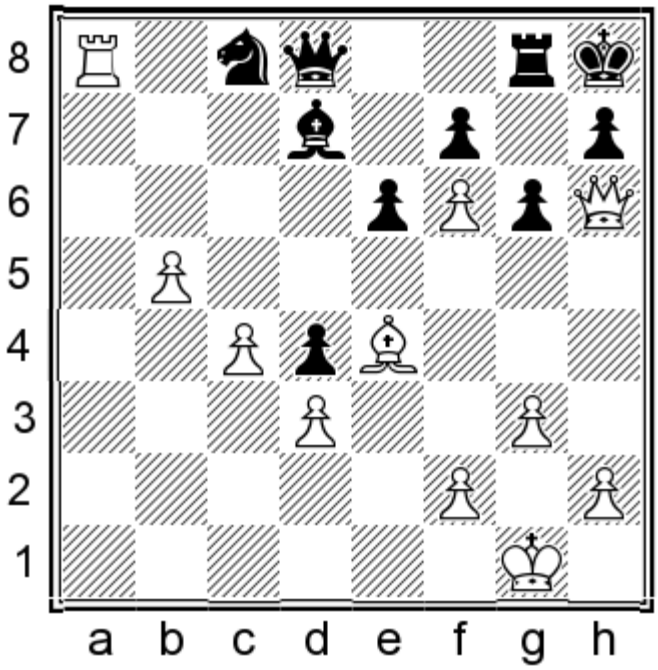
25...♘c2

Black wants to close the a1–h8 diagonal with ♘d4, but the problem is the same as in the 19...♘d4 line, namely that after ♗xd4 cxd4, the c- and b- passed pawns start to march with the support of the bishop and rook. The best chance would have been 25...♘xd3! 26.♗xd3 ♗xb5 and Black finally makes use of his poor bishop, although his position remains suspicious after 27.♖a3 ♗xc4 28.♗c2 White even has some g4 ideas in mind with the threat of ♕xh7 ♔xh7 and ♖h3 mate! 25...♕f8 leads to a lost endgame: 26.♕xf8 (The pretty *26.♕g7+!?* also wins: *26...♖xg7 27.fxg7+ ♕xg7 28.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 29.♖a7+–* and ♖b7 or ♖c7 next.) 26...♖xf8 27.♗e5 ♖c8 28.♖a7+– Black is completely squeezed and ♖b7 or ♗c7 wins next move.

26.♖a7 ♘c8

On the direct 26...♘d4 27.♗xd4 cxd4 28.c5 comes with tempo. 28...♘c8 29.♖b7+– the connected pawns should decide the outcome.

27.♖a8 ♘d4 28.♗xd4 cxd4



29.♕f4!

A difficult move to find! The queen was well-placed on h6, but the f6 pawn had to be protected. White could not advance the c-pawn immediately because b5 was hanging. Now the plan is simply to push h4-h5, as Black has no useful move anyway.

29...♕b6 30.♖b8

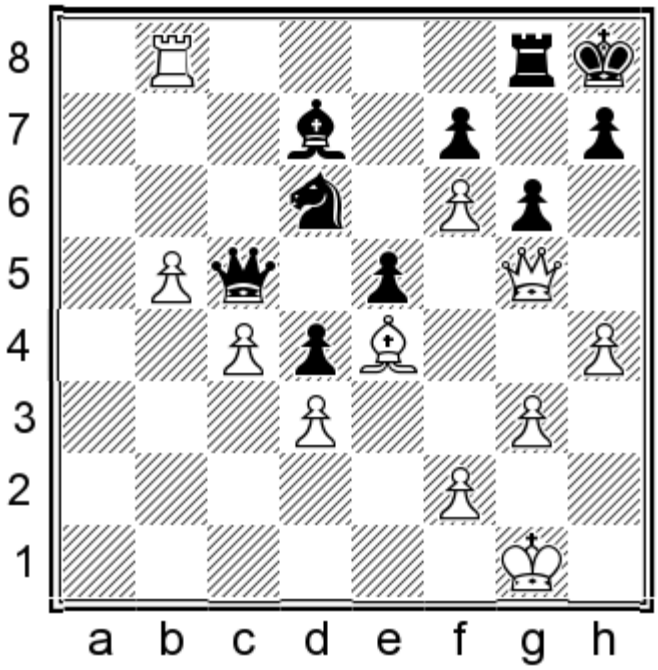
This seems to be unnecessary because the queen stands better on c5. White should have started with 30.h4 ♕c5 31.♕h6! The new threat is b6, which cannot be taken by the knight as after ♕xb6 h5 is going to be mate in few moves. The only move is 31...♕h5, but now the endgame is lost after 32.♕xh5 gxh5 33.♖a6!+– and b6 next move! The pawn promotes.

30...♕c5 31.h4 e5 32.♕g5?

Up to this point, Svetushkin has played a nearly perfect game, but this mistake allows his opponent a miraculous escape. 32.♕h6 was the winning move. Svetushkin was probably worried about the f6 pawn (which could be simply lost after 32...♕d6) but White wins with 33.♖b7 ♗e8 34.h5! ♕xf6 35.hxg6+– and Black has no good recapture on g6.

32...♘d6!

Suddenly the black pieces are jumping out, which could not have happened if the queen was still on h6. Perhaps Svetushkin was counting on his next move, having planned this very nice response beforehand, but he missed something later.



33.♗xg6!

A great tactical shot, but Black also had something in mind! 33.♖xg8+ ♔xg8 34.♕h6 ♘e8! saves Black from the mate!

33...♗c8!!

A fantastic resource! Black closes the 8th rank and allows more pieces to focus on the defense. Both sides have to be very precise now! 33...fxg6 was refuted by 34.f7! ♖xb8 35.♕f6#;

33...♖xb8 34.♕h6 fxg6 35.♕g7#

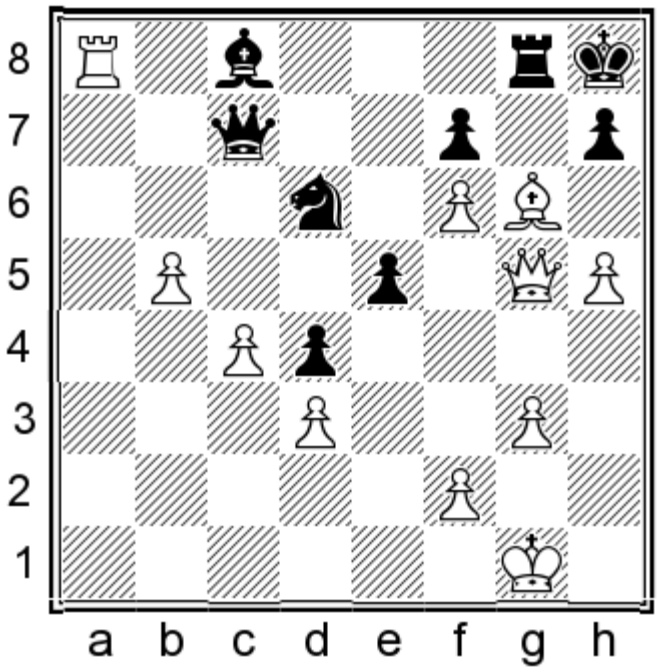
34.h5!

The tension is growing! White is threatening ♕h6 and on fxg6 f7 decides the game. Therefore, Black is forced to take the f7 square under control.

34...♕c7!

34...fxg6 loses again to 35.f7! ♘xf7 36.♕f6+ ♖g7 37.b6! and b7 next wins!

35.♖a8



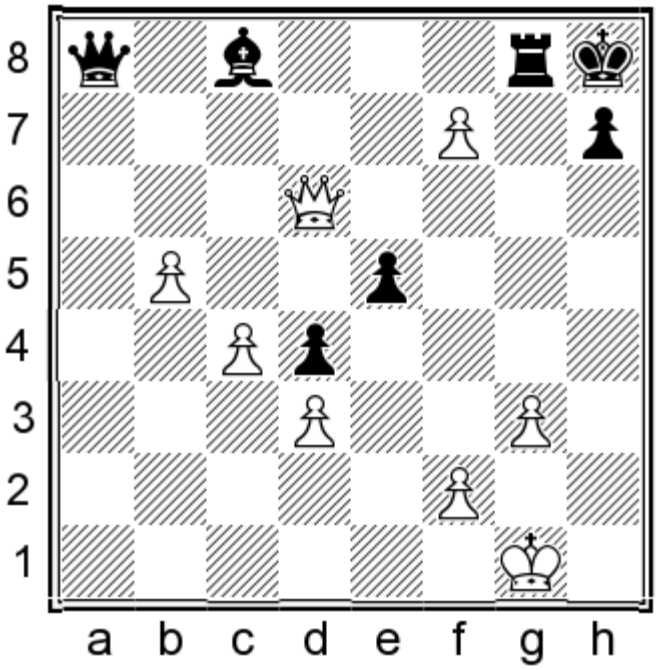
35...♕b7!

Black continues his perfect defense. He sends the active rook away and intends to create counter-threats with ♗h3 and mate on g2. 35...fxg6 was still losing because of 36.hxg6 hxg6 (*36...♖xg6 37.♕xe5+– and* Black is helpless against f7 or c5!) 37.b6 ♕f7 38.♕h4+ ♕h7 39.c5+– Despite the two extra pieces, the 3 passed pawns decide the game in White's favor.

36.♕h6!

Another only move, this time by White! The game enters a forced stage where all the moves are obligatory: if somebody fails to find one, he loses.

36...fxg6 37.hxg6 ♖xg6 38.♕f8+ ♖g8 39.♕xd6 ♕xa8 40.f7!



Despite the extra rook and bishop, the game seems to be over. White is threatening ♕f6 or ♕e5 mate, but on the final move of time-trouble Black finds the only way to escape.

40...♖xg3+!! 41.fxg3 ♕a1+ 42.♔f2 ♕a2+!

Only this check leads to perpetual, but the real point is still to come...

43.♔f3 ♕a8+!

This is the reason the queen had to give the checks on the a-file. Now the king is forced back. 43...♗b7+ loses to 44.♔g4 ♕e2+ 45.♔g5 ♕e3+ 46.♔f6 ♕h6+ 47.♔e7+– and the king runs away and the f-pawn promotes.

44.♔f2

44.♕c6?? ♗b7 loses as both ♕xb7 ♕xb7, and f8=♕ ♕xf8 are check!

44...♕a2+ 45.♔f3 ♕a8+ 46.♔f2

Draw agreed! A fantastic game, where both players should have gained the full point for their achievements!

1/2

GAME 37
F. Caruana (2844)
B. Gelfand (2748)
Baku FIDE Grand Prix 2014 Baku AZE (2.2)
03.10.2014, [B90]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Caruana and Gelfand continue their thematic opening discussion in the Sicilian Najdorf Defense.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.f3

White avoids the 6.♗e3 ♘g4 variation and starts with the 6.f3 move-order. This allows Black an extra option, to try the 6...♕b6 line, but Gelfand prefers his favorite 6...e5.

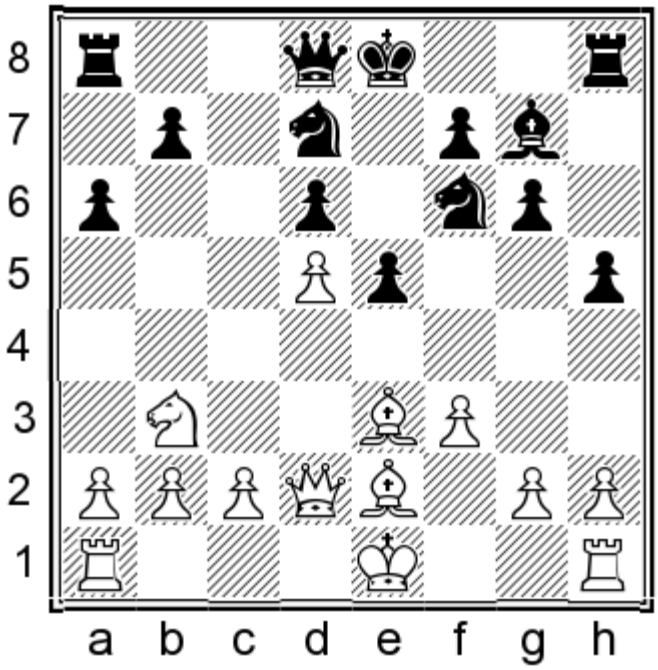
6...e5 7.♘b3 ♗e6 8.♗e3 h5 9.♕d2 ♘bd7 10.♘d5

Caruana has already played many games from this position, including one against Gelfand...

10...♗xd5

10...♘xd5 11.exd5 ♗f5 is the alternative for Black.

11.exd5 g6 12.♗e2 ♗g7



13.♘a5

With this move Caruana deviates from his own game against Gelfand. The move contains several ideas. First of all, it attacks the b7-pawn and tries to obtain the c6 square for the knight. Secondly, White has a pawn majority on the queenside and the long-term idea to make use of it is the plan of c4, b4, c5. However, if White starts with c4, then Black has the strong response ...a5, followed by ...b6, creating a strong blockade on the dark squares. Their previous encounter from January 2014 went 13.0-0 0-0 14.♖ac1 b6 15.h3 ♖e8 16.g4, also with an extremely complex game which was later won by Caruana. I have also commented on this game in a previous CEWN.

13...♕c7N

aturally Black does not want to allow the knight’s jump to c6.

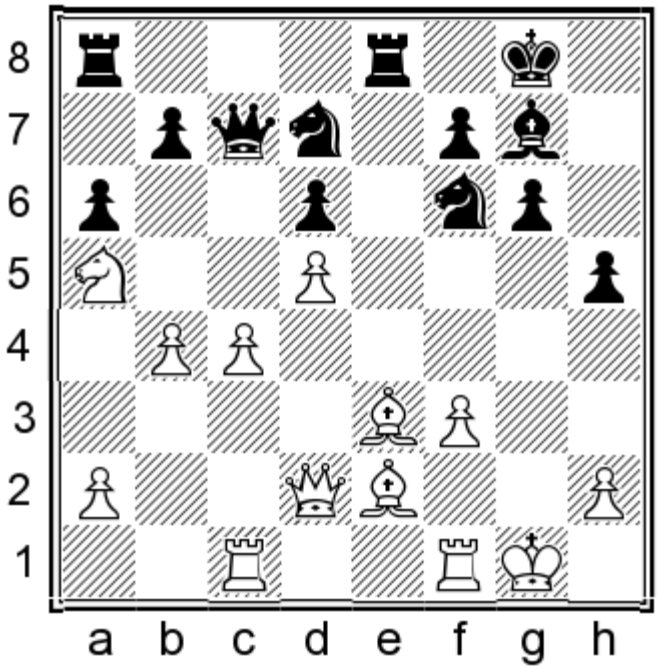
14.c4 e4

Black creates his counterplay in the center and on the kingside, where he has his pawn majority. He also opens the diagonal for his strong bishop and creates some nice squares for his knights on e5, or in case of 15.f4 on g4.

15.0-0 exf3 16.gxf3!

This looks illogical at first sight, but White's kingside is much safer if he controls the g4 square. White could later play ♖f2 and ♗f1, controlling all the important squares on the kingside. 16.♗xf3 is met strongly by 16...♘g4! when White is forced to give up the pair of bishops.

16...0-0 17.b4 ♖fe8 18.♖ac1



Both sides are making their most useful developing moves. The game is heading towards still waters from a complex position, when suddenly Gelfand takes a fantastic decision...

18...♖xe3!

An intuitive exchange sacrifice! Black is aiming for compensation on the dark squares, and all his pieces will become very active. In the event of some logical and calm continuation such as 18...♖e7, doubling the rooks on the e-file, White maintains an advantage after 19.♗f4 ♖ae8 20.♖f2! followed by ♗f1. The two bishops perfectly neutralize the e-file and White creates serious threats, connected with c5!

19.♕xe3 ♖e8

White is faced with a difficult decision. The e3 bishop was perfectly controlling the c1–h6 and the g1–a7 diagonals. Now, the queen is forced to choose which diagonal to give Black. He must allow either ...♗h6 or ...♕b6.

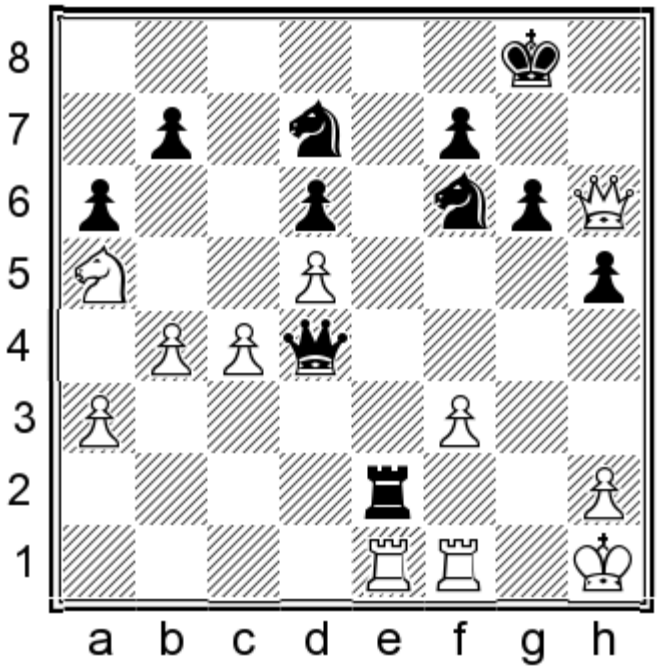
20.♕d2

On 20.♕f2 Black gets excellent compensation after 20...♗h6 21.f4 ♖e4!

20...♔h7?!

Black would like to get his bishop to h6, but this is a too slow execution of the right plan... It was much stronger to play 20...♕b6+! 21.♔h1 ♗h6! 22.f4 This is already an achievement, since Black has spared himself the ♔h7 move. But White had nothing better.

(On *22.*♕*xh6* ♖*xe2* White's pawns are loose. The one on b4 is hanging and the knight is suddenly misplaced on a5. The e2 rook turns out to be very active and it can't be exchanged with ♖e1 because of taking and then ♕xb4. We can see the power of the black pieces in the next variation: *23.a3* looks natural to protect the b4, but it is actually losing: *23...*♕*d4!* Threatening to attack the h2 pawn with the queen and after *24.*♖*ce1*



24...♘*g4!!* wins decisive material as *25.fxg4* leads to mate *25...*♕*e4+−+*)

22...♘e4 23.♕e1 It is clear that Black has enough compensation here. He can choose between some tempting options 23...♘ef6 is the computer's suggestion with the idea to drive the knight to g4! Perhaps, White has nothing better than repeating the moves with ♕d2.

(*23...*♕*d4* is more human to activate the pieces even more *24.*♘*xb7* ♘*df6* with extremely active pieces.)

21.♘b3

White is an exchange up, therefore Caruana changes plans and tries to consolidate his position, bringing back his pieces. This is a very clever reaction and the move also serves to meet the ♕b6 idea with c5! However the machine considers 21.♔g2 ♗h6 22.f4 ♘e4 23.♕d3 to be much stronger with an advantage for White. In such positions, it is impossible to compete with the strongest machines. At the end, 'he' will always be the one who is right! Caruana's 21.♘b3 was a more human decision.

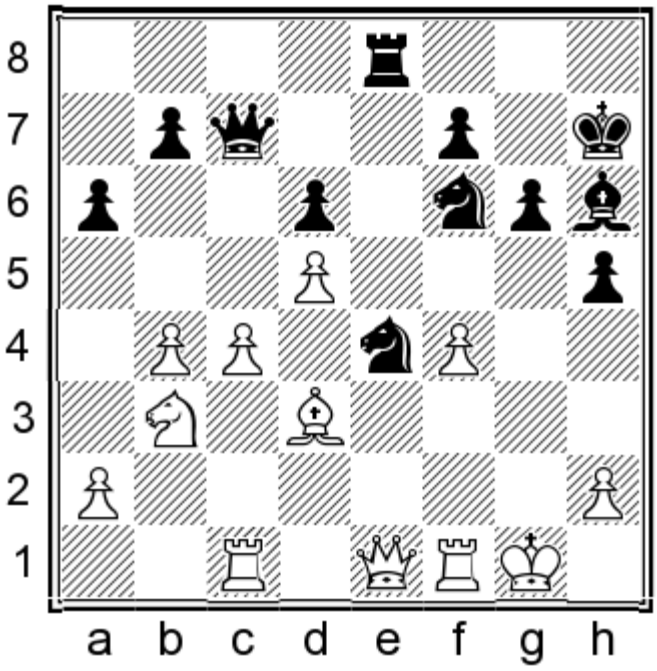
21...♗h6 22.f4 ♘e4 23.♕e1

The white pieces are temporarily pushed back, but they are preventing all the direct threats. Therefore Gelfand decides to continue activating his pieces...

23...♘df6

23...♕b6+ 24.♔h1 ♕e3? with the same purpose of activating the pieces is much worse, because of 25.♗f3 and White consolidates.

24.♗d3



White must operate with ‘small’ moves, using the fact that Black cannot gain any benefits from the pin on the e-file. White intends to play ♖c2-e2!

24...♕d7!

A very nice answer from the Black side also. The last piece which could be improved was the queen, therefore Gelfand drives it to h3 or g4! There is a forced line to win a pawn with 24...♘c5 25.♕d2 ♘xd3 26.♕xd3 ♕b6+ 27.c5 ♕xb4 but now White maintains the initiative after 28.♖c4 ♕b5 29.a4 ♕d7 30.c6

25.♖c2!

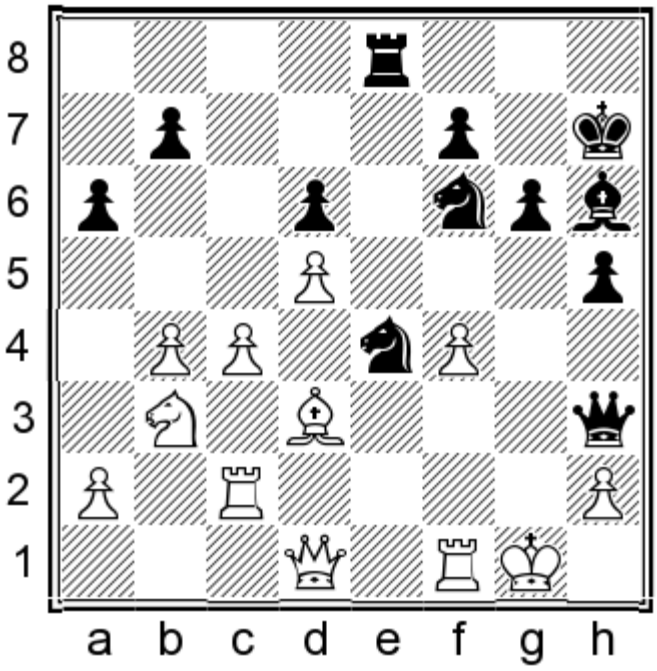
White continues his plan and also prepares to meet the ♕g4 check with ♖g2. Therefore Black plays the more direct queen move.

25...♕h3

attacking the d3 bishop.

26.♕d1

The most human reaction again, but this is an inaccuracy, allowing a tactical blow for Black.



The computer suggests the non-human 26.♕e2 protecting the bishop, but it leaves the queen pinned and also deprives White from playing ♖e2. It is impossible to make such moves for a human, but the machine claims an advantage for him. 26...♘f2 (*26...♘g3?* is met by *27.♕f3!*) 27.♗xg6+ fxg6 28.♕xf2 ♖e4 29.♘d2 ♖xf4 30.♕e2 is in White's favor but of course the position appears extremely dangerous, and it is very difficult to head for this. 26.♗xe4 is wrong because of 26...♖xe4 27.♕g3 ♕f5! when Black wins a pawn and maintains his very dangerous pieces.

26...♗xf4!

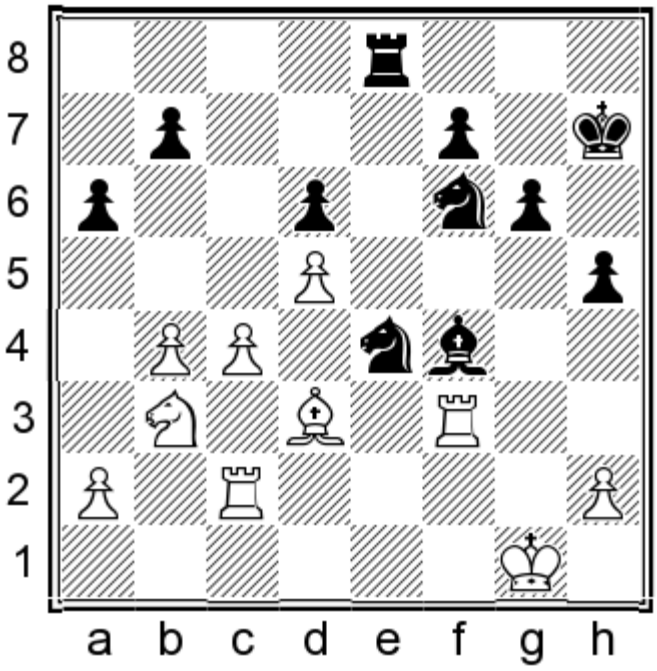
This small tactical shot solves the problems. All his pieces were standing perfectly, so the position called for a direct blow.

27.♕f3

Caruana decides to play on. White could have forced a draw with 27.♖xf4 ♕e3+ 28.♖ff2 ♘xf2 29.♖xf2 ♘g4 30.♕f3 ♘xf2 31.♕xf7+ ♔h8 32.♕f6+ ♔g8 33.♕xg6+ ♔f8 34.♕f6+ with perpetual check. Neither side can avoid this line if White takes back on f4.

27...♕xf3 28.♖xf3

Black is still down materially, as he has only one pawn for the exchange, but his very active pieces supported by further active moves give him enough compensation.



28...♘g5!

The bishop cannot be taken because of ♘h3 when Black invades with his rook along the e-file.

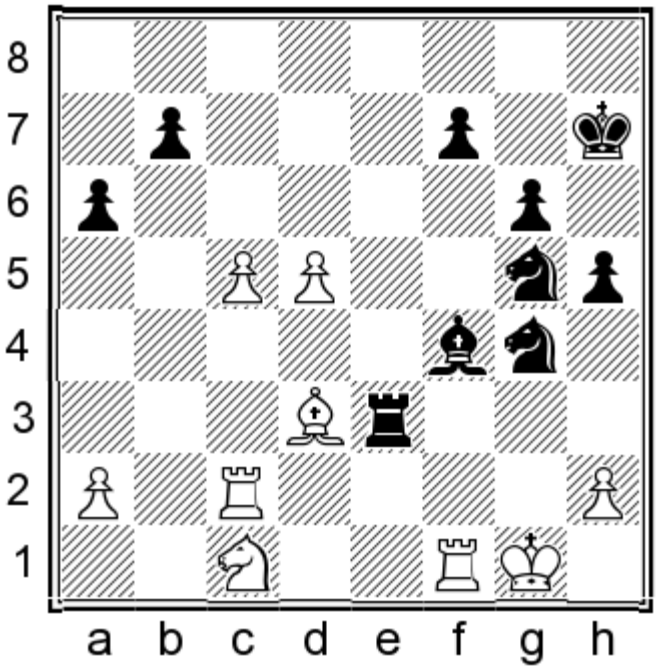
29.♖f1 ♖e3! 30.♘c1 ♘g4!

Very nice play by Gelfand! White's position still looks very dangerous, despite the queens being off the board.

31.c5

Caruana is searching for counterplay with the passed c-pawn.

31...dxc5 32.bxc5

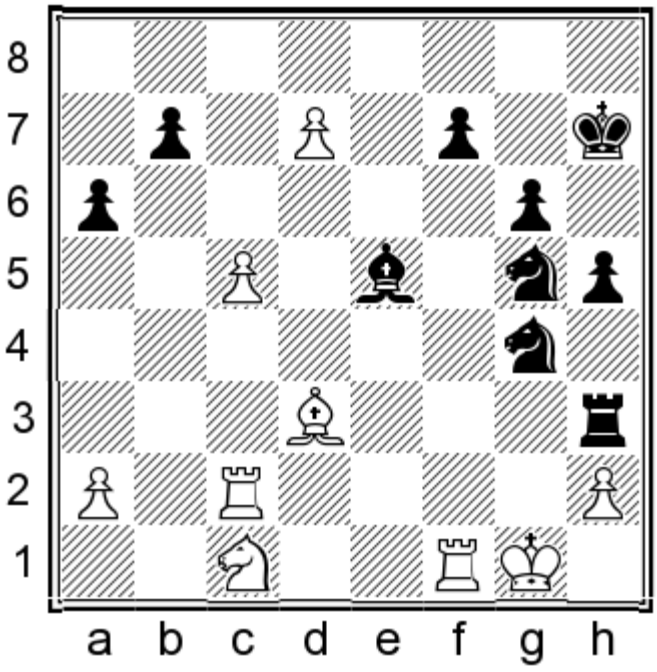


32...♖e8?

This is too passive and not in the spirit of the position. The correct move was 32...♗e5 with the idea of playing ...♖h3, which was not possible immediately as the bishop was hanging on f4 (♘h3 no longer works). 33.d6

(On *33.c6 bxc6 34.dxc6* ♗*c7* and ♖h3 next.)

33...♖h3! 34.d7



34...♗xh2+! 35.♔g2

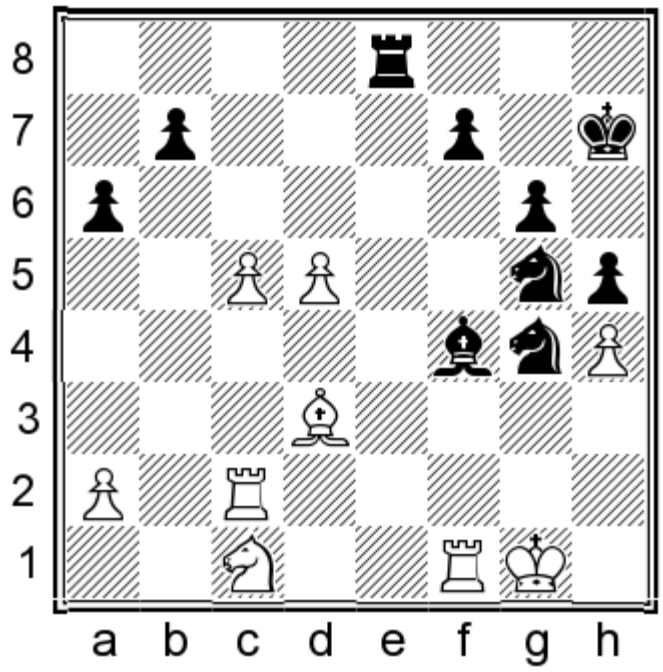
(*35.*♖*xh2* ♖*xh2 36.d8=*♕ ♘*h3#*)

35...♘e3+ 36.♔f2 ♗c7 with Black's advantage, but both players had spent most of their time in the complex middle-

game and it was very difficult to find these ideas.

33.h4?

The most human move again, but it spoils the win. White misses an unexpected tactical blow:



33.♔h1! was the winning move as the bishop is now hanging on f4. If it moves, h4 then sends away the knight and wins the f7 pawn with check. 33...♘e3 (*33...♗e3 34.h4*) 34.♖e2! also wins.

33...♖e3!!

This brilliant move forces perpetual check! Caruana was probably expecting 33...♘h3+ 34.♔g2 ♖e3 but here the difference is 35.♖f3! and white is winning.

34.hxg5

White had nothing better.

34...♖g3+ 35.♔h1

35.♖g2? loses to 35...♗e3+ 36.♔h1 ♖h3+

35...♖h3+ 36.♔g2 ♖g3+ 37.♔h1 ♖h3+

A great fighting draw!

1/2

GAME 38
T. Radjabov (2726)
L. Dominguez Perez (2751)
Baku FIDE Grand Prix 2014 Baku AZE (7.5)

09.10.2014, [D70]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

We are now faced with a very sharp and exciting battle, where both players calculate well and the game ends with a perpetual check.

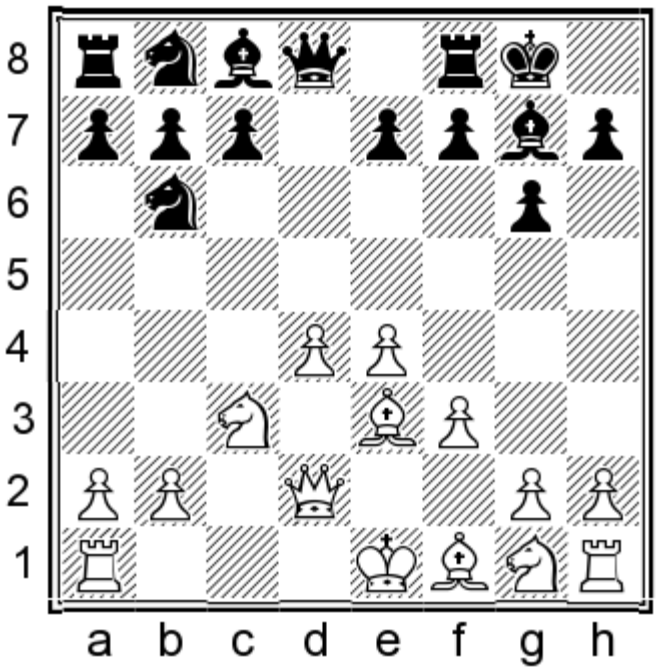
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3

Dominguez wants to play the Gruenfeld Defence and Radjabov opts for the recently popular 3.f3 system.

3...d5

In the spirit of the Gruenfeld. 3...♗g7 4.e4 is a transposition to the King's Indian Saemisch variation.

4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘b6 6.♘c3 ♗g7 7.♗e3 0-0 8.♕d2



We have reached another crossroads. Dominguez goes for the old main line...

8...e5

A few rounds earlier in this tournament, Caruana had defeated Svidler with the white pieces in the recently popular line 8...♘c6 9.0-0-0 ♕d6

9.d5 c6

Perfectly in the spirit of the opening. Black has developed his pieces and allowed his opponent to occupy the center and now he seeks counterplay by undermining it.

10.h4

This is all well-known with lots of games and theory behind it...

10...cxd5 11.exd5 ♘8d7 12.h5 ♘f6 13.hxg6 fxg6

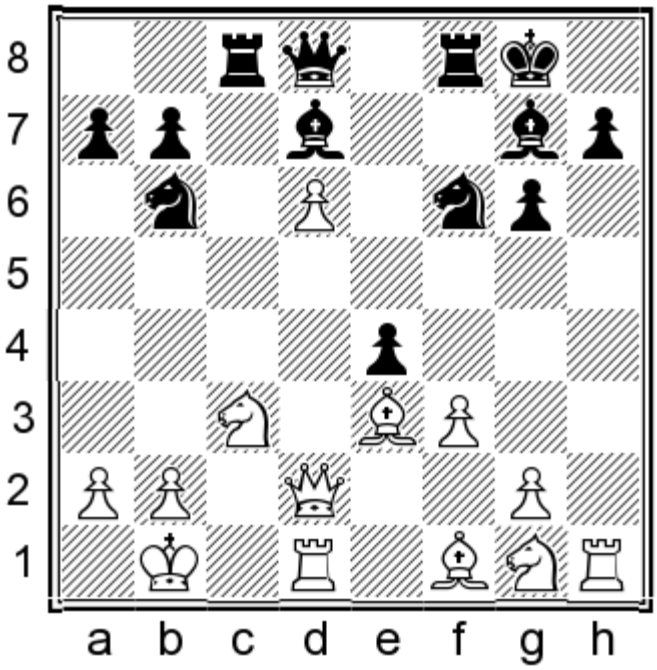
Positionally this is a wrong decision, but the h-file could not be opened because Black gets mated after ♗h6. Of course, positional factors are irrelevant in such sharp positions.

14.0-0-0 ♗d7 15.♔b1 ♖c8 16.d6

16.♔a1 is the other main line. In a previous issue, we commented on another fascinating game from the Anand-Gelfand World Championship match, which continued with 16...e4 17.♗d4 ♘a4.

16...e4!

A very logical decision. Black opens the diagonal for his Gruenfeld bishop, just as Gelfand did against Anand.



17.♔a1

This is the novelty and a deviation from a previous Dominguez game. Radjabov was definitely very well-prepared as he could expect all the previous moves from his opponent. A year ago Grischuk played 17.fxe4 ♘g4 18.♗g5 ♕e8 19.♘f3 and here Dominguez improved on the Rodshtein-Navara game with 19...♖f7! 20.♗e7 ♖xc3! 21.bxc3 ♕c8! 22.♖c1 ♘a4! Blitzing out all these moves! Very impressive preparation! 23.♘g5 ♕c5! 24.♘xf7 ♘xc3+ 25.♖xc3 ♗xc3 26.♘h6+ ♔g7 Despite the extra rook, White has nothing better than allowing perpetual check with 27.♕d5 ♕b4+ 28.♕b3 ♕xe4+ 29.♕c2 ♕e1+ 30.♕c1 ♕e4+ 31.♕c2 ♕e1+ 32.♕c1 ♕e4+ 33.♕c2 1/2 Grischuk-Dominguez Perez, Thessaloniki 2013. It is interesting that despite the extremely sharp position, most games finish in a draw with some kind of perpetual check.

17...♖e8

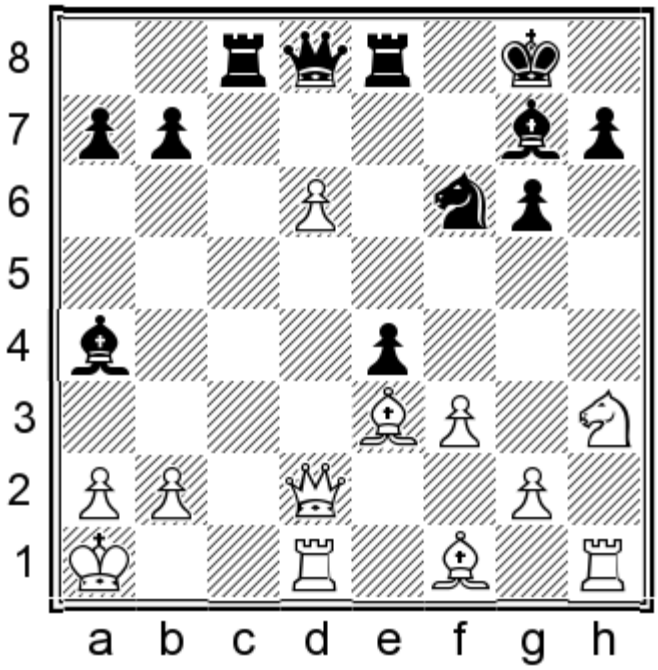
Dominguez even knew about this 17.♔a1 move, as his answer arrived without much thought, and Radjabov also blitzes out his next move...

18.♘h3

Well, it is time to develop the kingside. White intends to head to g5, bringing another piece into the attack.

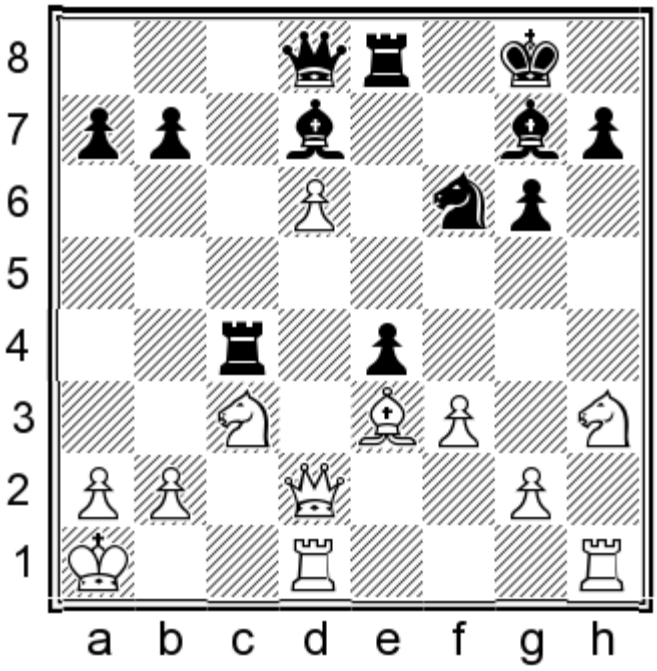
18...♘c4

After a long think, Dominguez decides to grab the pair of bishops and open the way for his queen to develop to her most dangerous attacking spot on a5! This was also new for Radjabov, since after the necessary capture on c4, he also thought for an hour in this very complex position. The computer suggests 18...♘a4 just as Gelfand played against Anand. Radjabov had probably prepared at home 19.♘xa4 ♗xa4



20.♗e2! with the idea of connecting the rooks and playing ♖c1 next! If Black does not do something directly, the middlegame might turn to be very bad for him because of the d6 passed pawn. 20...♖c2 (On *20...♗xd1 21.♗xd1!* and ♗b3 ♔h8 ♘g5 is coming with decisive threats. Black's attack is over and the upcoming White one is going to be extremely dangerous.) 21.♕d4 ♖xe2 22.♕c4+ ♔h8 23.♘g5 also looks very dangerous...

19.♗xc4+ ♖xc4



Both players were out of their preparation and it was now time to calculate the variations on their own. Of course, it is a very difficult task as both sides have numerous resources and nothing is forced, but one mistake could be decisive. Things had happened very quickly so far, but due to the complex position, both players soon found themselves in time-trouble. White now needs to make a decision, as he must choose between ♗h6 and ♘g5. Both moves have their pluses and minuses.

20.♘g5

Activating the knight and now a check on d5 could be fatal for Black! 20.♗h6 was the most logical continuation (at least to me), trying to trade off the strong bishop. 20...♗h8 was what Radjabov was afraid of. Of course, it is very difficult to deal with such complications over the board.

(20...exf3 is the computer's suggestion. It gives a line which ends in equality after 21.gxf3

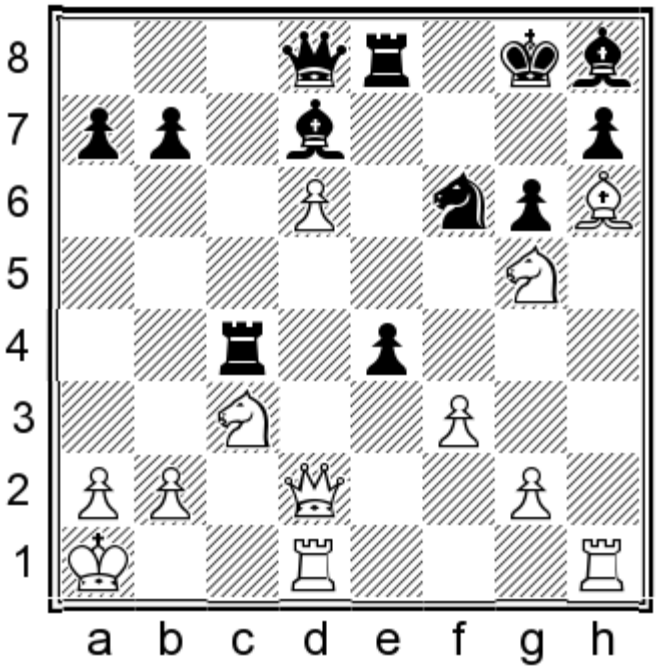
(On *21.♗xg7 fxg2! 22.♕xg2 ♔xg7* looks very dangerous for Black, his king seemingly much more vulnerable, but the machine is happy and enjoys his extra pawn.)

21...♗xh6 22.♕xh6 ♗xh3 23.♕xh3

(On *23.♖xh3 ♖e6 24.♘e4 ♕d7* Black seems to protect everything.)

23...♕d7∞)

21.♘g5



The inclusion of the ♗h6 ♗h8 pair of moves is good White since a check on d5 could lead to mate right away. The drawback is that it closes the h-file, so the sacrifices on h7 are much harder to execute — and White no longer has the option to neutralize the long diagonal with ♗d4 as happened in the game. However the machine likes White after 21...exf3 22.♖he1! fxg2 23.♘d5! Indeed, it looks very dangerous.

20...exf3 21.♘xf3!

A clever, cold-blooded decision. White intends to put his bishop on d4 and the knight serves perfectly to protect it. 21.gxf3 was more in the spirit of the position at first sight, keeping the strong attacker on g5, but somehow Black's attack develops faster with 21...♕a5! Black has ...♖xc3 in mind and the a1–h8 diagonal could cause real problems for White. 22.♗d4 does not work now in view of 22...♖xd4! 23.♕xd4 ♕xg5.

21...♘g4!

Black also finds the right solution in a complex position. He now gains a nice possibility for meeting the ♗d4 move. On 21...♕a5 22.♗d4 is good for White. He continues with ♖de1 and invades e7: the minor pieces are covering everything now.

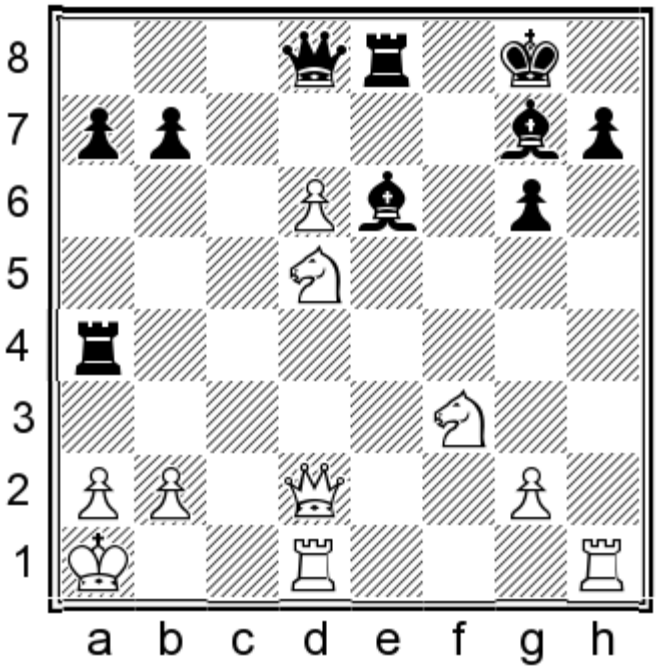
22.♘d5!

Excellent calculation by White also, and Radjabov had to foresee the final position... On 22.♗d4 Black was intending to play 22...♗xd4 23.♘xd4 ♘e3! implanting an annoying knight on e3, which cannot be disturbed by ♖de1 in view of ...♖xd4 and check on c2! 24.♖c1 ♕f6 Black has full control over the position and the dark squares. The pawn on d6 might also become a weakness now as the rook does not support it from behind anymore. Black could win it with ...♖c6.

22...♘xe3 23.♘xe3 ♖a4!

Creating the decisive threat of ...♗e6! White has only one way to deal with it!

24.♘d5! ♗e6!



25.♘e7+!

Perfect play by both players and it leads to a draw at the end! 25.♘g5 was tempting, but it loses to 25...♕xd6! A very nice queen sacrifice, which cannot be accepted... 26.♘f6+ ♗xf6 27.♕xd6 ♖xa2+ 28.♔b1 ♖xb2+ 29.♔a1 (*29.♔c1* ♖*c8*+–+) 29...♖b4+ 30.♖d4 ♗xd4+–+ wins.

25...♖xe7!

25...♔f8 is possible, but better avoided. 26.♘e5! ♖xa2+ (*26...♗xe5 27.♖df1+! ♗f5 28.♘xf5*+–) 27.♔b1 ♖xe7 28.dxe7+ ♕xe7 29.♖xh7 and the black king is more vulnerable. 25...♔h8?? leads to a quick mate after 26.♖xh7+! ♔xh7 27.♖h1+

26.dxe7 ♖xa2+

It was possible to continue the fight with 26...♕xe7 27.♕d8+ ♕f8 28.♕xf8+ ♔xf8 29.♖xh7 ♖xa2+ 30.♔b1 ♖xb2+ 31.♔c1 but the game should end in a draw anyway.

27.♔b1 ♖xb2+! 28.♕xb2 ♗f5+! 29.♔a2 ♗e6+

29...♕a5+ also just leads to perpetual check: 30.♕a3 ♗e6+ 31.♔b1 as the queen cannot be taken because of e8=♕ and the e6 falls, Black is forced to make a draw: 31...♗f5+ 32.♔a2=

30.♔b1 ♗f5+ 31.♔a2 ♗e6+ 32.♔b1

A very nice game! Both players deserved to gain more than half a point.

1/2

GAME 39
S. Mamedyarov (2764)

H. Nakamura (2764)
Tashkent FIDE GP 2014 Tashkent UZB (4.6)
24.10.2014, [D31]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We are going to see a great fighting game now, one with a lot of different tactical ideas and a very interesting material-structure constellation. The final result of the game is a draw-but it doesn't reduce the interest in it at all! Both players played very well.

1.d4

Mamedyarov is a very aggressive player with the white pieces and his score with White is clearly better than with Black. Shakhriyar also often shows interesting opening ideas.

1...d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗e7

and so we have another game in the Queen's Gambit. Mamedyarov and Nakamura are not playing this position against each other for the first time, so of course it is going to be very interesting to see what White has prepared this time.

4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f4

this is one of the most critical lines.

5...c6

Black is preparing to play ♗f5 next, which is not possible without the c6 move because of ♕b3.

6.e3

White wants to play ♗d3, with a slightly better position.

6...♗f5

and of course Black develops the bishop to f5. Now on moves like ♕b3 he always has ♕b6.

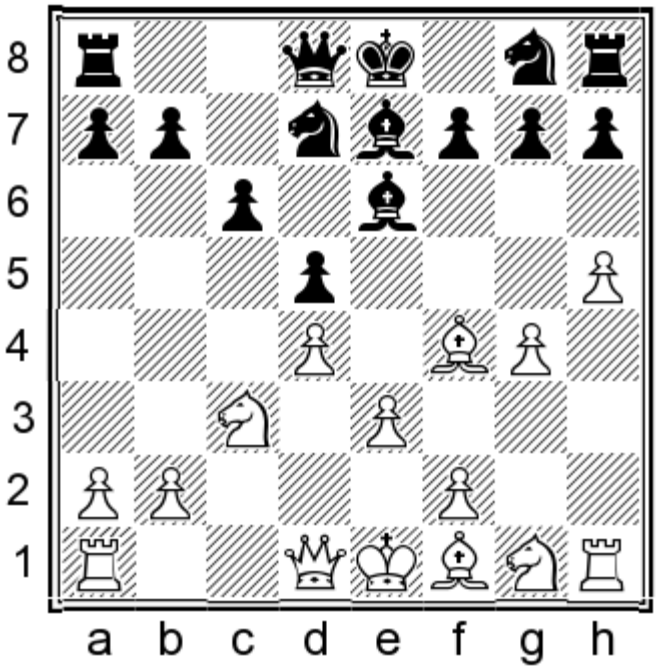
7.g4

This is, of course, all theory and quite a popular line which Nakamura has previously also played with White.

7...♗e6 8.h4

White's idea is to win maximum space on the kingside and hope to later develop the pieces in a normal order, while having a space advantage.

8...♘d7 9.h5



9...♘h6!

A great move by Black! The knight takes up a better position on h6 than on f6 and we will soon see why. After the more usual 9...♘gf6 White continues with 10.f3 and it is not that simple for Black to find a clear plan.

10.♗e2

The correct choice. 10.f3?! f5! and Black's play on the kingside could become very dangerous.

10...♘b6

After 10...f5 11.gxf5 (Another option could be *11.♗xh6 gxh6 12.gxf5 ♗xf5 13.♗g4 ♗xg4 14.♕xg4 ♘f6* and we have a position which is very difficult to evaluate. Maybe White can hope to be better here, but on the other hand Black could develop fast and dangerous play, so things are very unclear.) 11...♘xf5 12.♘f3 and of course the position is again unclear, but perhaps White could hope for some advantage.

11.♘h3

Mamedyarov is also creative. Maybe White wants to play ♗xh6 and ♘f4 at some moment?

11...g5!?

What a move! The game is getting very complicated now. Black could also have continued with 11...0-0, or 11...♖c8 — which is a useful move in case White should decide to castle queenside.

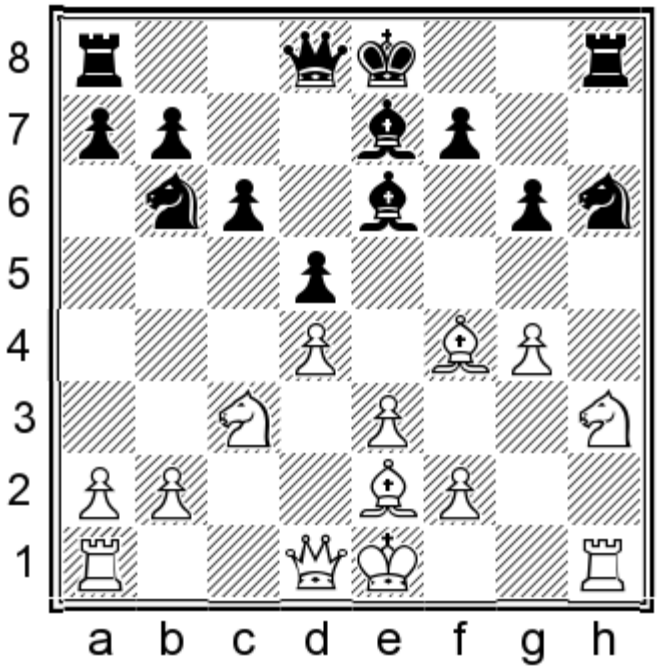
12.hxg6

White has to take on g6.

12...hxg6

Black now has the positional threat of playing ...g5 next and then maybe ...f6-♘f7-♕d7 and 0-0-0, with an excellent

position.



13.♗e5!?

A very nice tactical idea from Mamedyarov destabilizing Black's position, which looks so solid.

13...f6

Black has nothing else, because White would play ♘f4 next anyway.

14.♘f4

Things now become very tactical.

14...fxe5

Black calculates correctly. In case Black should try to win a piece after 14...♗f7, White has the amazing 15.♕c2!! — a silent but deadly reply and Black can't protect the g6 pawn. 15...fxe5 16.♘xg6 ♖g8 17.♘xe5 and White has a clear advantage.

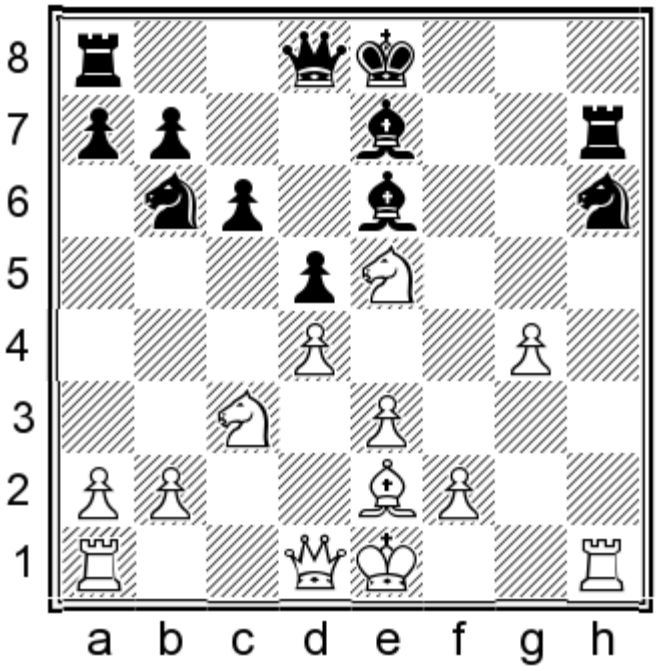
15.♘xg6

is the most logical, but White also had another choice. After 15.♘xe6 ♕d6 16.g5 ♕xe6 17.gxh6 we have a very interesting position which is extremely difficult to evaluate. My feeling is that Black should be doing fine here, but of course the central position of both kings makes the game very dynamic.

15...♖g8?!

I think Nakamura miscalculated something when he played this move. Black should have tried to keep the extra piece with 15...♖h7 16.dxe5

(After *16.♘xe5* Black has the amazing move



16...♗h4!! A very hard move to find during a practical game and maybe this is exactly the move which Nakamura missed. If Black didn't have 16...♗h4!!, then White's position would be clearly better, but now Black is not only closing the h-file, but also putting pressure on the f2 pawn, and is much better here.)

16...♕d7 17.♘f4 0-0-0 18.♕c2 ♖hh8 and I can't imagine Black being worse here. A piece up is a piece up!

16.♘xe7 ♕xe7 17.♖xh6

So White has won back the piece and is a pawn up.

17...e4

Black tries to close the position and prepares to pressurise the g4 pawn.

18.a4!

A very logical and strong move. White wants to play a5-a6, chasing away the black knight from b6 and at the same time destroying the black pawn structure.

18...♘d7 19.♕b3?!

White misses a great chance to stand much better. After the correct 19.♔d2! ♘f6 20.♕h1 White transports all his heavy pieces to the kingside. 20...♔d7 21.♖g1 and I can't see any compensation for Black being a pawn down — White should be clearly better here.

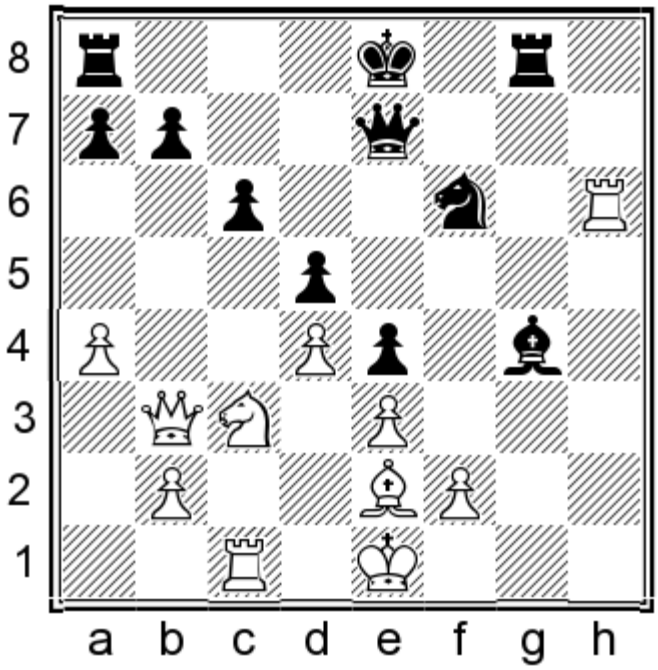
19...♘f6

Now the g4 pawn is lost.

20.♖c1

Mamedyarov is preparing an exchange sacrifice.

20...♗xg4



In the event of 20...♘xg4 White would continue similarly as in the game with 21.♖xe6 ♕xe6 22.♕xb7 ♖d8 23.♘d1 and I think White's position looks very promising.

21.♖xf6

Of course this is what White was playing for with ♕b3-♖c1.

21...♕xf6 22.♕xb7 ♖d8

All Black moves were forced until here. We now have an extremely complicated position and it is very difficult to say who is better. White's problem is the exposed king on e1, which could very quickly come under attack.

23.♕xa7

Why not take a pawn if you can..?

23...♖f8

A logical move, but Black also had many other interesting continuations. 23...♗f3 was an option, or 23...♗d7 — which looks like a stupid move, but the bishop from d7 is going to defend the c6 pawn which is very important. 24.♕c5 (*24.♘d1?! ♕d6!* and Black would already be better.) 24...♖b8 with a very unclear position.

24.♘d1

Of course the f2 pawn needs to be protected.

24...♗xe2 25.♔xe2 ♕d6

Black wants to start some play on the b-file.

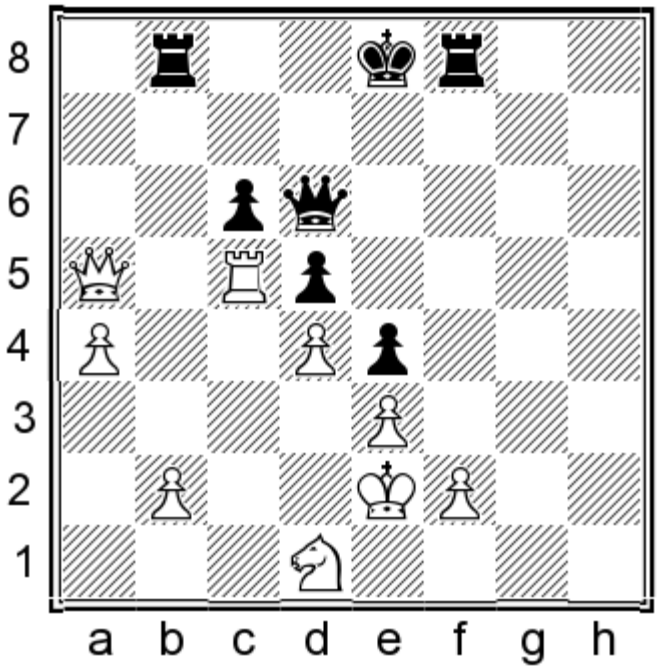
26.♖c5

This move looks a bit strange... Of course White wants to double on the c-file, but the idea is very slow. Maybe a more promising try to fight for an advantage would have been 26.b4!? reminding Black that the king on e8 is open as well. 26...♕xb4 27.♖xc6 ♖f7 28.♕a6 and I think White's position is a bit better.

26...♖b8

Naturally Black places his rook on the b-file.

27.♕a5



27...♔d7!

Nakamura maneuvers his king to the perfect spot, from where he protects the c6 pawn, while connecting the rooks at the same time.

28.♕c3

We have quite a funny position. White is an exchange down but he has two pawns for it, which is more than enough from a material point of view. However, the knight on d1 is very passive and can never be moved because the f2 pawn would immediately be under attack. Black also doesn't really have any big plans here, so I think the position is just equal now.

28...♖a8 29.a5 ♖fb8 30.b4

White is trying to keep the queenside closed and as solid as possible.

30...♖b5

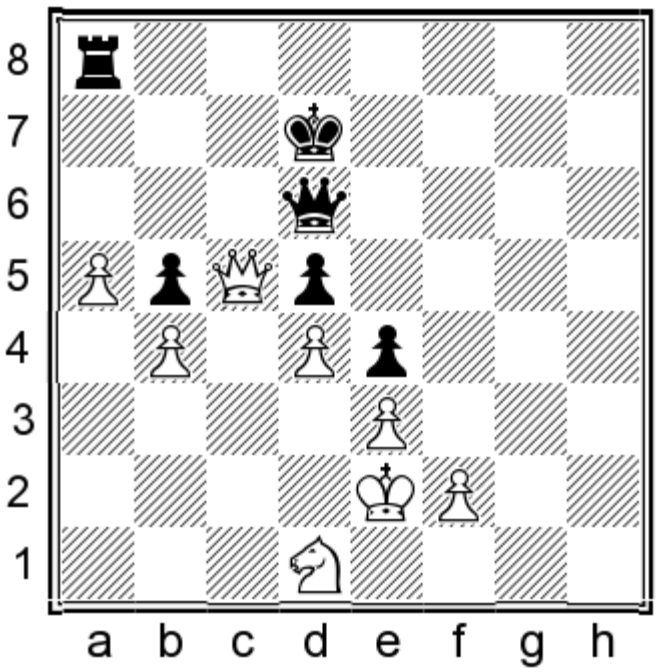
By exchanging the rooks, the game is more-or-less coming to a peaceful end. Maybe 30...♖b7 could have been a try for Black to develop some play on the queenside, but of course White might be in time with ♘b2-♘a4-♘b6 and the position would remain complicated.

31.♖xb5

Of course White should not let Black take on c5.

31...cxb5 32.♕c5!

Attacking the b5 pawn and threatening to play ♘c3.



32...♖c8!

Black also shows perfect play by understanding that the pawn on b5 is not important.

33.♕xb5+ ♔e6

Black wants to play ♖b8 next and take the b4 pawn.

34.a6

Iff 34.♕a4 then Black has the strong 34...♕c7! and I think White's position starts to look suspicious.

34...♖a8

Winning back the a6 pawn with a draw offer... Indeed, the position is just equal and the game would probably end in a draw, but both players could have made a few more moves to be "sure" about the result. Anyhow, this was a very interesting and exciting game!

1/2

GAME 40
B. Gelfand (2748)
M. Vachier-Lagrave (2757)

Tashkent FIDE GP 2014 Tashkent UZB (6.1)
27.10.2014, [D83]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

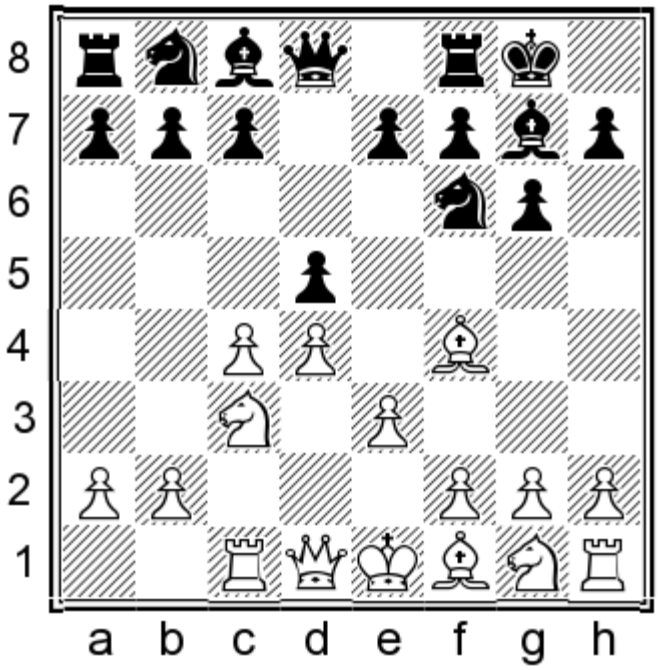
A very exciting game awaits, but one not without mistakes.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5

Vachier-Lagrave plays his favorite Gruenfeld Defense and Gelfand chooses a slightly forgotten setup.

4.♗f4 ♗g7 5.e3 0-0 6.♖c1

White develops his queenside first and wants to be prepared for the standard ...c5 break.



6...c5

Vachier-Lagrave follows the old main line and sacrifices a pawn for activity, in typical Gruenfeld style. White's set-up used to be popular some time ago, but it went out of fashion because of the reply 6...♗e6 7.♕b3 c5! 8.♕xb7 ♕b6! with some very sharp and long lines, which lead to a draw in the end. Perhaps Gelfand wanted to check his opponent's memory, or maybe he had prepared some improvement at home...?

7.dxc5 ♕a5

This is the main move when White plays 6.♘f3 instead of 6.♖c1. The difference is that White can simply capture one more pawn now, because he can safely defend his c3 knight against threats like ♘e4. 7...♗e6 is more common and probably also better.

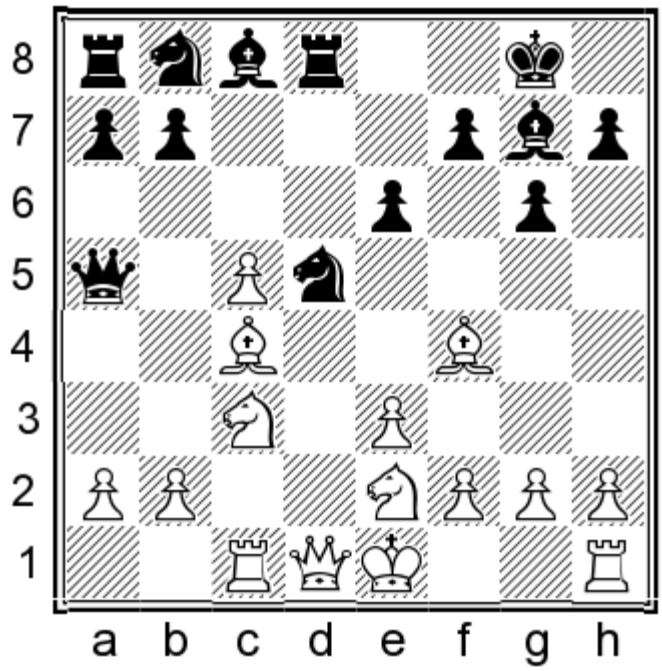
8.cxd5 ♖d8

After sacrificing two pawns, Black must find the most active moves to generate some compensation against the undeveloped kingside. 8...♘e4 9.♘ge2 is the key resource of playing 6.♖c1 instead of ♘f3 and White is considered to be fine here.

9.♗c4 e6

This is the novelty. Hardly a prepared one though, because Black does not equalize! 9...♕xc5 10.♗b3 is also better for White.

10.♘ge2 ♘xd5



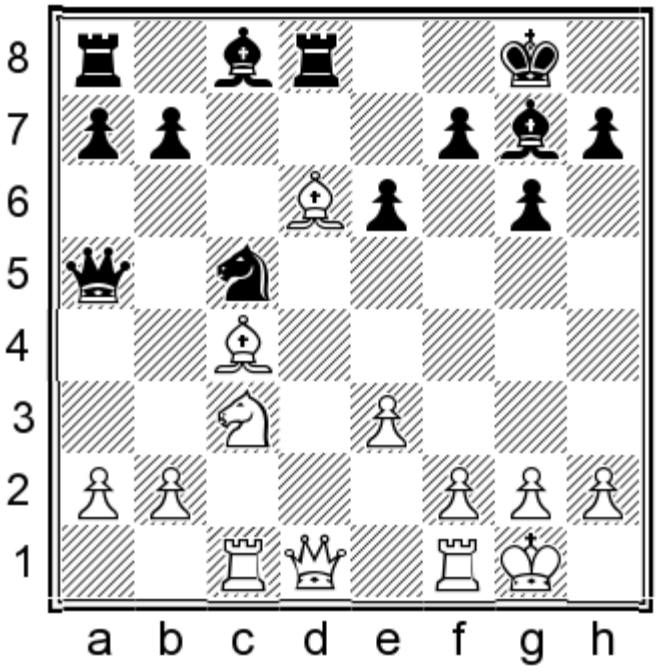
Black could restore the material balance with 10...exd5 11.♗d3 ♕xc5 but he ends up with a positional disadvantage after 12.0-0 ♘c6 13.♘b5 and White has very fluid development with his pieces and easy play against the isolated pawn on d5.

11.♗d6!

A very nice and unusual motif! White protects his extra c5 pawn and closes the d-file.

11...♘xc3 12.♘xc3 b5!

Black can only try to prove he has compensation by playing such active moves. All Gruenfeld players must look for such opportunities! 12...b6 runs into the unpleasant 13.♕f3! A hugely important point to confirm White's advantage is in the variation 12...♘a6 13.0-0 ♘xc5



The pin on the d-file seems to be good for Black, but actually he is losing a piece after 14.b4!! ♕xb4 15.♗xc5+–

13.♗d3!

Unpinning the d-file again. On 13.♕f3 Black has the strong reply 13...♗d7! 14.♕xa8 ♗c6 trapping the queen and the difference from the 12...b6 line is that after 15.♕xb8 ♖xb8 16.♗xb8 bxc4 the bishop was hanging and Black is fine.

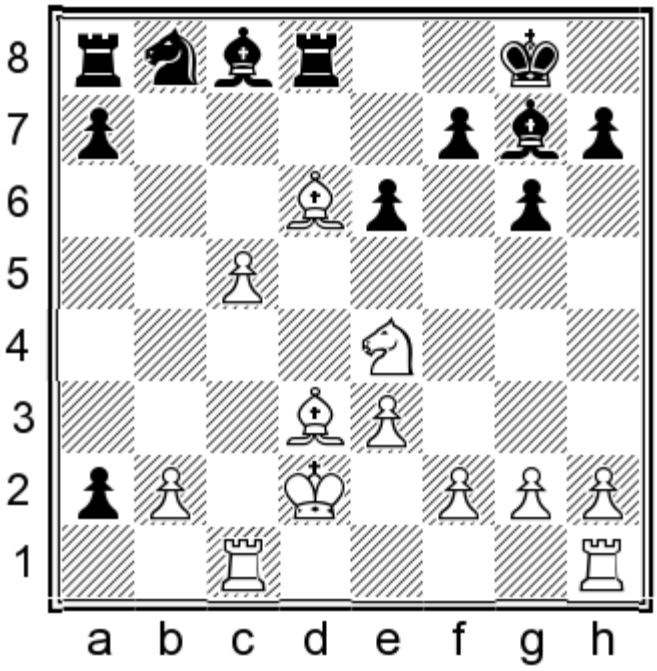
13...b4 14.♘e4

The 'human' move. Gelfand strengthens his position by centralizing the knight. The machine suggests 14.♘b5!? threatening to jump with both minor pieces to c7. It is not obvious what Vachier-Lagrave had in mind here?

14...b3+!

14...♗xb2 turns out to be a bad alternative after White's great reply 15.0-0! Finally the king has found safety and White keeps a huge positional advantage. The fortress of the c5 pawn and d6 bishop completely paralyzes Black. 15...♗xc1 16.♕xc1 and Black will end up in serious trouble on the dark squares. 16...♕xa2 is an attempt to prevent ♕b2, but it fails to 17.c6!+– when c7 next decides the game.

15.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 16.♔xd2 bxa2



17.♖a1

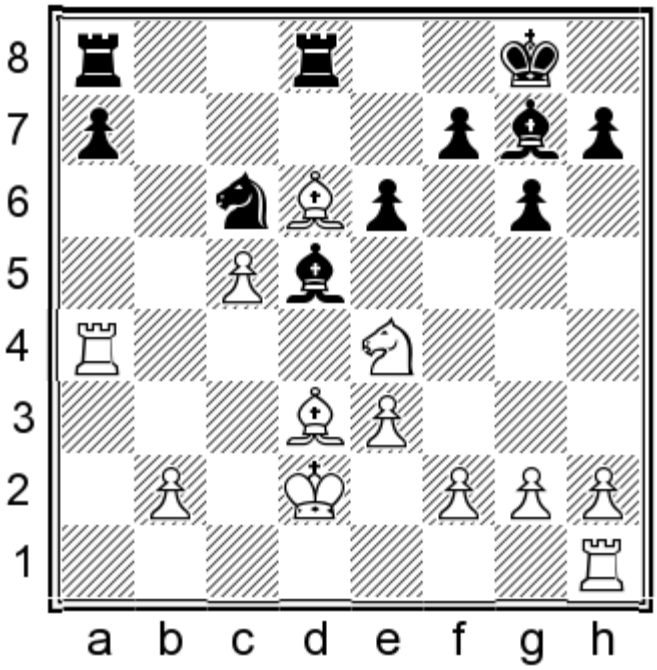
After a couple of natural moves, Black still needs to solve some problems. His problem is the same as previously: he could maintain the balance materially, but then he ends up in a positionally bad situation. Vachier-Lagrave rightly decides to maintain the activity and tries to win back the material later under better circumstances.

17...♗b7

The idea is correct, but this is probably not the best execution. 17...♘c6 seems to be stronger. The idea is 18.♖xa2 f5 19.♘c3 ♘b4 20.♖a4 ♘xd3 21.♔xd3 ♗e5 winning back the material this way, when Black is finally close to equality. 17...♗xb2 18.♖xa2 ♗g7 leads to a too passive position after 19.♖b1 ♘c6 20.♔e2! — a strong prophylactic move to avoid any kind of danger on the d-file and now Black faces serious difficulties in finishing his development. The bishop on d6 is just too strong and 20...♗d7 is strongly met by 21.♗a6!

18.♖xa2 ♗d5 19.♖a4 ♘c6?

This is the first clear mistake. It allows White to consolidate his position and create a very dangerous passed pawn with b4-b5.



19...♗xb2 leads to the usual problems of passivity. 20.♖b1 ♗g7 21.f3 protecting the g2 pawn just in case and White is now threatening ♘c3 — Black is in positional trouble. 21...♘c6 22.♘c3±;

19...a5! was the right move to prevent b4 and only next ...♘c6 and ...♘b4 if possible. Black has compensation, but it is unclear whether it is sufficient or not. However, this was definitely the way to play. On 20.f3 (with the idea of ♘c3, preventing Black from developing his knight to c6) he could play 20...♘d7.

20.b4!

This is the first moment when White could be sure that he had won the opening battle. Probably this led to Gelfand relaxing prematurely and he now starts to make mistakes...

20...♘e5

Vachier-Lagrave still pins his compensation hopes on active piece-play.

21.b5

The first inaccuracy. Gelfand wanted to improve his position by keeping all the advantages he had before, but this allows some counterplay.

White should have gotten rid of some active pieces with 21.♗xe5! Of course, it is a very difficult decision to give up that nice bishop on d6. 21...♗xe5 (*21...♗xe4* is met by *22.♗d6 ♗xg2 23.♖g1 ♗b7 24.b5* with a positional win.) 22.♔e2 Leaving the d-file. White still keeps the extra pawn and the only way to win it back leads to a clearly worse position after 22...f5 23.♘g5! Keeping an eye on e6 while the knight is heading to f3. 23...♗xg2 24.♖c1 ♗d5 25.♗c4!± with serious problems.

21...f5 22.♘c3

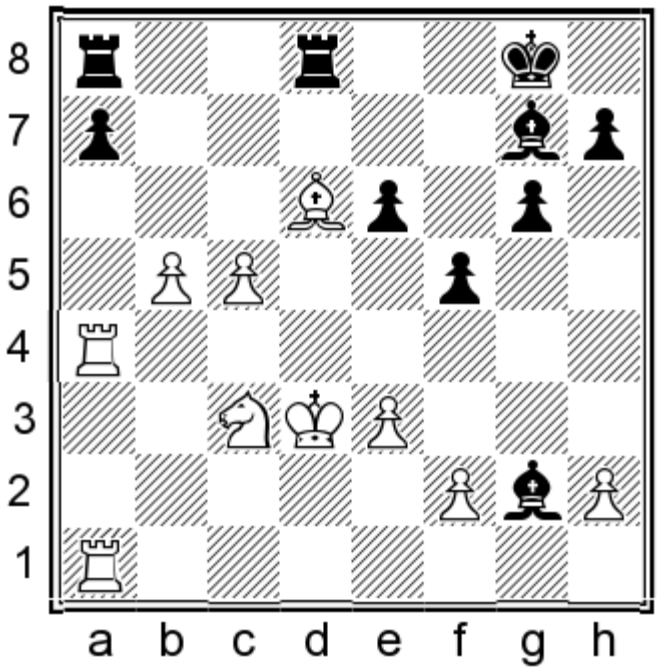
Another human move, forcing the strong bishop away, but it is a mistake. The machine shows that the only way to keep the advantage is by 22.♘g5! ♗xg2 (*22...h6* is met by *23.♗xe5 ♗xe5 24.♘f3* keeping the extra pawn.) 23.♖e1! Such moves are impossible to find for a human — White seemingly just moves into ♘f3, but the concrete lines still show a clear edge for him... 23...♗d5 (On *23...h6 24.♘xe6 ♘f3+ 25.♔e2 ♘xe1 26.♗c4!+–* White first takes back one

of the rooks and then the knight on e1.) 24.e4! This is the point of playing the rook to e1! 24...♘xd3 (*24...fxe4 25.♗xe4*±) 25.♔xd3 fxe4+ 26.♘xe4 The bishop on d6 controls the important f8 and b8 squares of the black rooks and the strong c5-b5 passers guarantee an edge.

22...♗xg2 23.♖ha1

The most natural move to attack the a7 weakness, but it is another mistake. Gelfand underestimates the pin on the long diagonal and Vachier-Lagrave makes full use of it with some powerful moves. 23.♖d1 should have been played.

23...♘xd3 24.♔xd3



24...♖ac8!

Suddenly things are becoming very unpleasant. Everything is hanging because of the pins. ...♖xc5 is a threat, ...♗xc3 ♔xc3 ...♖xd6 is another one and the direct ...♖xd6 is also hanging in the air. What a turn of events! This could have led to a quick collapse, but Gelfand manages to stay cool and saves the game...

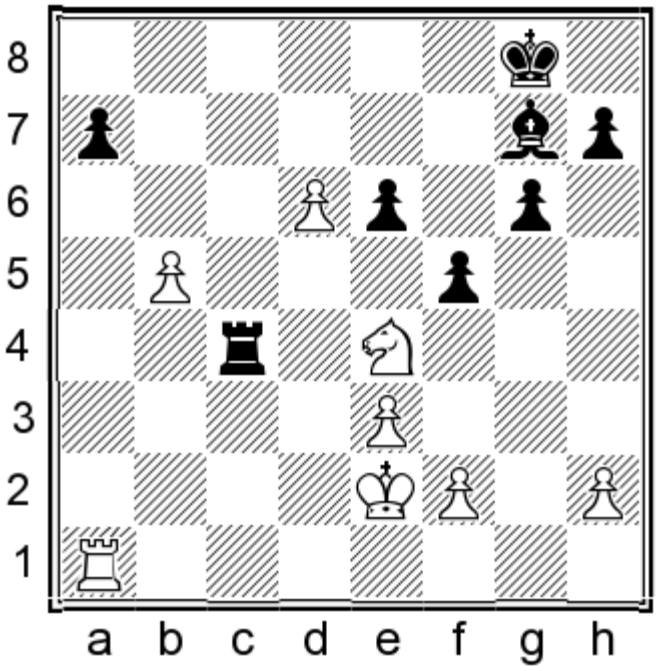
25.♖c4!

The only move to cover as many things as possible.

25...♗e4+!

Vachier-Lagrave senses the moment; he must try to win material, otherwise the a1 rook leaves the pin.

26.♔e2 ♖xd6 27.cxd6 ♖xc4 28.♘xe4



28.d7! was the accurate move order! Only after 28...♗f6 29.♘xe4! fxe4 30.♖xa7 transposes to the game.

28...fxe4

28...♖c2+!! would have given Black a big advantage. But of course, it is again a move which normally never comes to the human mind... 29.♔f1 Black can choose between two very pleasant continuations here:

(*29.♔d1* is met by *29...♖c8!* and Black wins the piece at much better circumstances than in the game.)

29...♖c8

(*29...♗xa1 30.d7 ♖d2! 31.♘xd2 ♗f6* followed by winning the pawn with ♔f7-e7. Black will end up with an extra pawn, but it is unclear whether a 4 against 3 on the kingside is sufficient for the win or not.)

30.♘c3!? A nice move, but it does not solve all the problems...

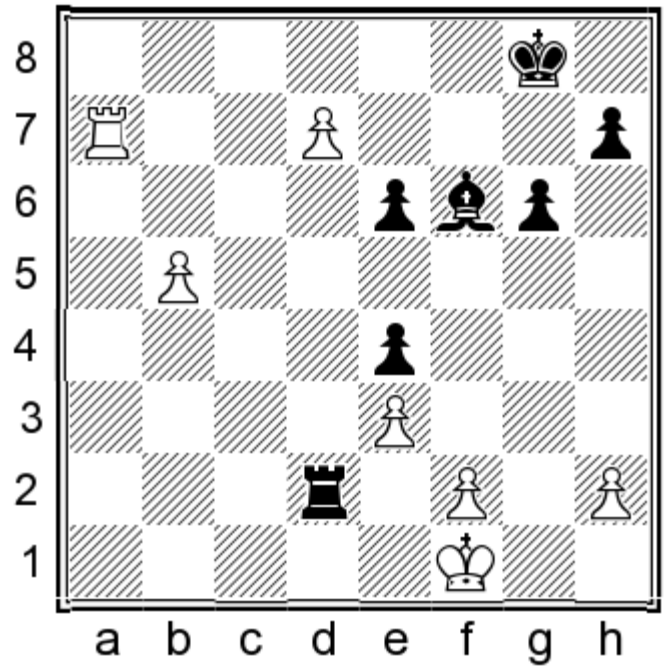
(In the line 30.♖xa7 fxe4 and Black has a better version compared to the game — he manages to stop the passed pawns just in time. 31.b6 ♗e5! 32.b7 ♖b8 33.♖a8

(On *33.d7 ♔f8 34.♖a8 ♔e7!* Just in time!)

33...♗xd6–+)

30...♗xc3 31.♖c1 ♔f7 32.d7 ♖d8 33.♖xc3 ♖xd7 again with an extra pawn, but in rook endgames, the defensive side can always hope for survival. If White manages to trade the queenside pawns, the 4 against 3 should already be a draw.

29.d7 ♗f6 30.♖xa7 ♖c2+ 31.♔f1 ♖d2



31...♖b2 leads to a similar draw as in the game after 32.♖a8+ ♔g7 33.d8=♕ ♗xd8 34.♖xd8 ♖xb5 35.♖d4=

32.b6

Black is forced to give up his bishop to stop the passed pawns and the arising rook endgame turns out to be a draw.

32...♔f8 33.♖a8+ ♔e7 34.b7 ♗e5 35.b8=♕ ♗xb8 36.♖xb8 ♖xd7 37.♖b4 ♔f6

A great fighting game!

1/2

GAME 41
S. Mamedyarov (2764)
S. Karjakin (2767)
Tashkent FIDE GP
Tashkent UZB (8)
29.10.2014, [E20]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

A very interesting game with a lot of tactical ideas and interesting play from both sides awaits. In the opening I guess it is easy to see that Black was very well-prepared and equalized pretty quickly. Then, instead of making a quick draw, Karjakin strangely played for a win in a position where he definitely couldn't be better — but luckily for him the position was still about equal!

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.f3

Lately the Nimzo with 4.f3 has been Mamedyarov's favourite. For a long time the 4.f3 move was very rarely played at the top level, but in the last 5 years it has become more-and-more fashionable. Even in the WCC match between Anand and Carlsen, White achieved a very big advantage out of the opening by playing 4. f3.

4...d5

Another popular move is 4...0-0 and White needs to play 5.a3 anyway, because in case of 5.e4 d5! Black seems to have good play, as in Mamedyarov-Aronian.

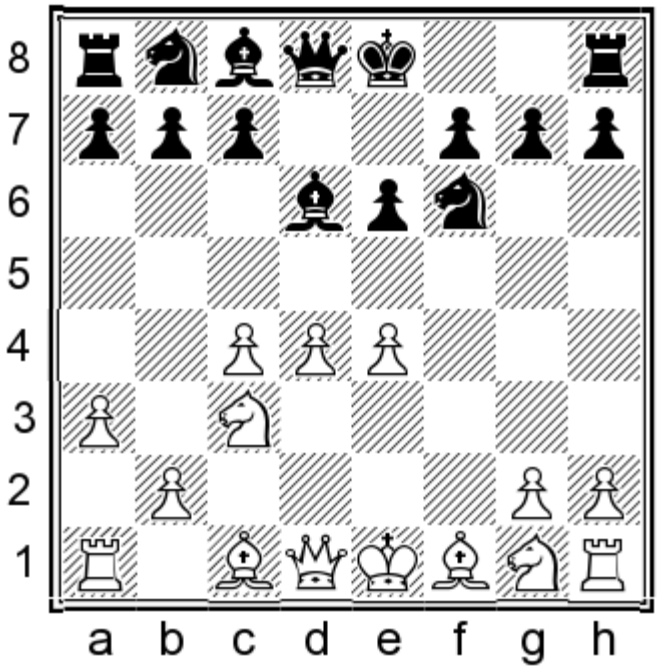
5.a3 ♗d6

This is quite a rare move, but not a stupid one at all. Because of the f3 move, White's pawn structure is not that solid anymore and Black wants to launch quick play in the center. Of course Black's main reply is 5...♗xc3.

6.e4

Of course White tries to dominate the center quickly.

6...dxe4 7.fxe4



7...e5!

This is a known move, but still a nice one to remember. Of course Black should stop White from playing e5 at any cost.

8.d5 0-0 9.♘f3 ♗g4

Actually this position looks quite strange to me. Black's play is clear, it is all about dominating the dark squares, but is it really an equal position? White's central pawns are so strong and Black sort of lost a tempo by playing ...♗b4-♗d6-e6 and then e5.

10.h3 ♗h5

Black giving up the bishop pair would be the same as agreeing to be worse.

11.♗d3

White is preparing to castle kingside.

11...♗c5!

Another very important move. If White managed to castle kingside, then to play ♗e3 and maybe ♘e2-♘g3, I can't imagine Black's position being OK. Karjakin loses another tempo just to stop White from castling kingside, but maybe now White can switch the plan to castling queenside?!

12.g4

It's time to get active!

12...♗g6 13.♗c2

A strange-looking move, but in fact a pretty logical one. White stops Black from playing ...♗d4 next and is preparing

to play b4. If White tried to castle queenside with 13.♕e2 then 13...♗d4 14.♗d2 ♘bd7 followed by ...♘c5 would give Black excellent play.

13...♖e8

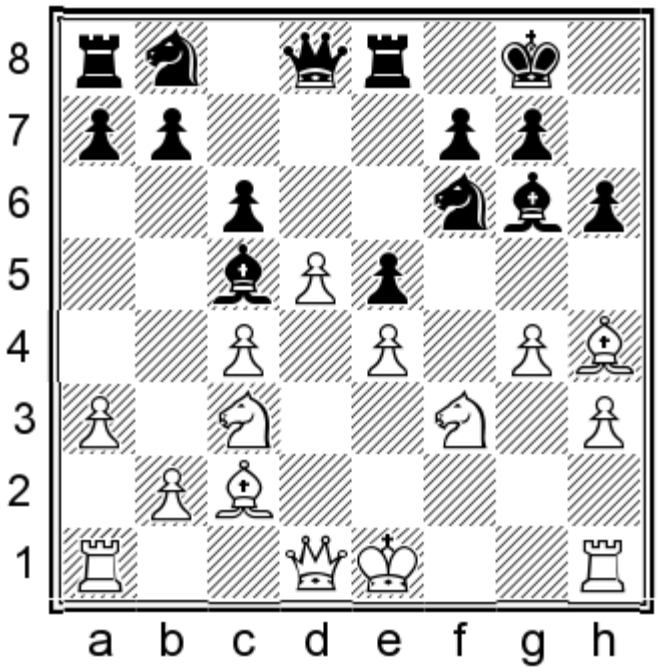
Black prepares to go to f8 in case of b4 and protects the e5 pawn at the same time.

14.♗g5 h6 15.♗h4

So far the game has been very logical and both players were playing quite quickly. We can see that the position is very complicated here and every move is very important.

15...c6

Black is starting his play against the white center, which is a very typical strategy.



16.b4

An extremely tempting move, but in hindsight we could say that it is perhaps not the best try. 16.♕d2!? with the idea of castling queenside looks very interesting to me.

16...♗e7

A very strong move! The black bishop takes up a better place than on f8, because he wants to keep the idea of playing ...♘xe4 and ...♘xd4 in mind. Otherwise it would, of course, be a hard move to make. The e5 pawn is hanging and now the answer to the question as to why Black played ...♖e8 is that he just wanted to provoke the b4 move. None of this is very logical, but the computer is very happy with Black's play, so we can be quite sure that Karjakin was still in his preparation.

17.0-0

17.♘xe5? didn't work because of 17...♘xe4! and Black is doing very well.

17...a5

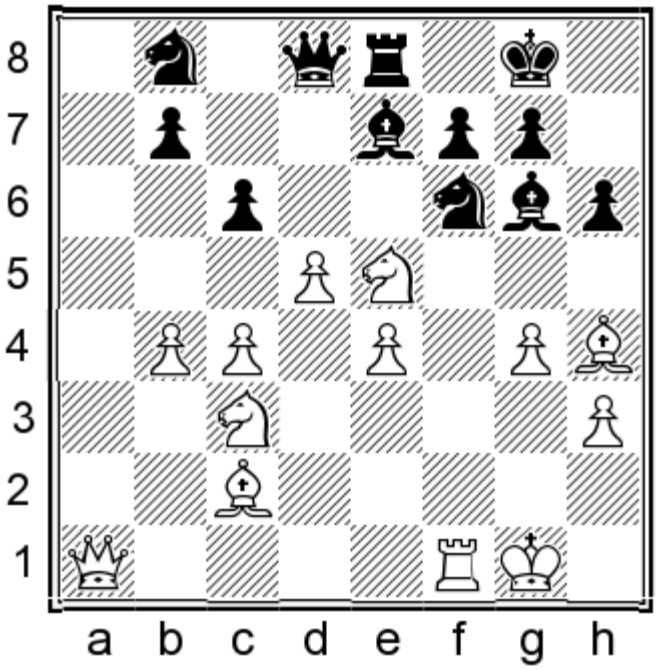
Wow! Black doesn't care about the e5 pawn and tries to destroy White from all sides. After his first very unhuman move, we could now be absolutely certain that Karjakin is still in his preparation. Now White has a lot to calculate... It would be a bad idea for Black to get greedy with 17...♘xd5? 18.exd5 ♗xc2 19.♕xc2 ♗xh4 20.♖ad1 and all white pieces are actively participating in the game, which gives White clearly more than just compensation for the lost pawn.

18.♘xe5

is a very tempting move and probably also the best. If White tried to play directly in the center with 18.♗xf6 ♗xf6 19.c5 then Black would gain excellent play with 19...♘a6! and, although position is very unclear, I think only White can be in danger here.

18...axb4 19.♘xg6

Once again White probably didn't have anything better. If 19.axb4 ♖xa1 20.♕xa1 Black has



20...♘xd5! with a good position.

19...fxg6

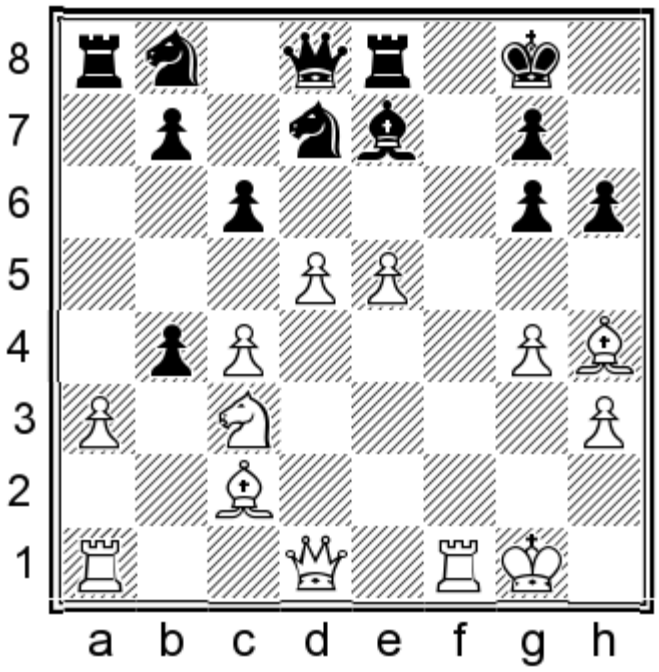
What a position! So many different moves are possible here!

20.e5

Once again 20.axb4 doesn't bring White anything other than a more-or-less equal position. 20...♖xa1 21.♕xa1 ♘xd5 22.♗xe7 ♘xe7 and slowly Black will play ...♘d7 and bring the knight to e5. White may be minimally better here, but the game should most likely end in a draw.

20...♘fd7

Black has to go back.



21.♗xe7

Clearly not the most critical reply. At first sight White's position looks very promising, but in fact Black's play seems to be enough to claim equality. 21.♗xg6? ♗xh4 22.♗xe8 ♕xe8 and Black is much better. A nice position for practical chess could arise after 21.♗g3 bxc3 22.e6 when White is a full piece down, but the very strong pawns and a possible future attack on the black king make things extremely complicated. This is a nice position for deep analysis, which we are not going to enter. We are just going to judge this position as very unclear!

21...♕xe7 22.♗xg6

White didn't have anything better as Black just wanted to play ♕xe5.

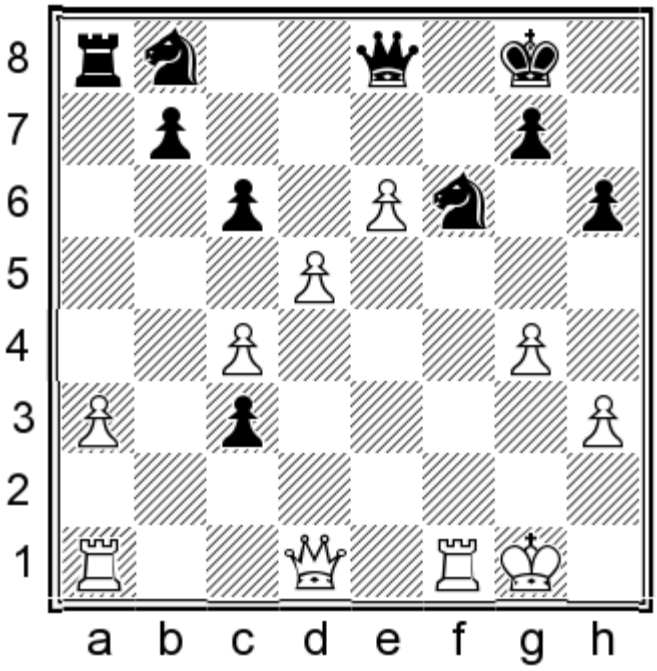
22...bxc3?!

A very strange move. Karjakin starts to play for a win in a position where it is very unlikely that he can be better. 22...♕xe5 would lead to an immediate draw after 23.♗xe8 ♕g3+ 24.♔h1 ♕xh3+ 25.♔g1 ♕g3+

23.♗xe8 ♕xe8

White has a rook and a pawn against the black knights, which of course gives Black a slight material advantage, but the white central pawns remain very dangerous and I think only White can be better here.

24.e6 ♘f6



25.♕d3!

White prepares to play ♖ae1 to support the central pawns in their movement. An easy move when we see it, but a hard move to play, as White also had a lot of other different ideas in this position.

25...cxd5 26.cxd5 ♘a6

Karjakin's idea is to bring the rook from a8 back into the game.

27.♖ae1 ♘c7

Karjakin finds the only way! 27...♖d8 28.d6 and White would be winning on the spot.

28.d6

White needs to give up one of the pawns, but puts Black in a dangerous pin.

28...♘xe6 29.♕c4

A good try. Black is OK after 29.♕xc3 ♖d8

29...♔f7

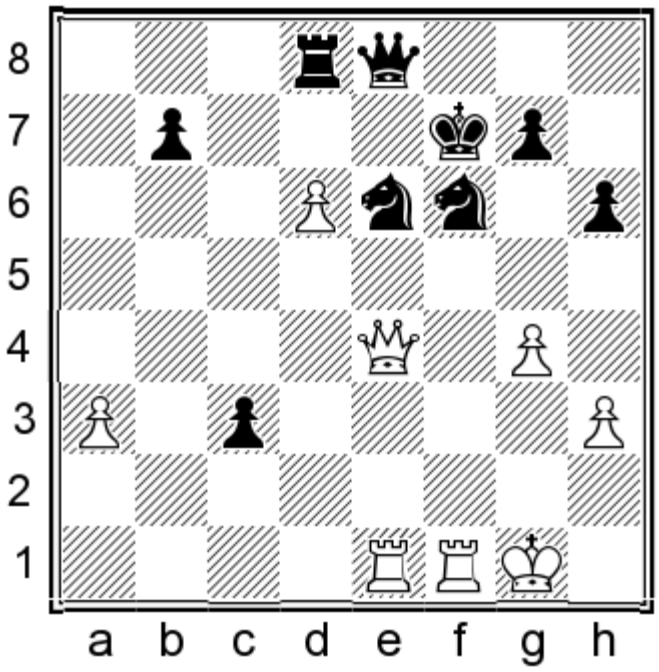
The only move to hold things together, but it is easy to see that Black's position is very dangerous.

30.♕e4!

An excellent move! White attacks the b7 pawn and at the same time he wants to play ♖xf6.

30...♖d8!

Once again Karjakin plays the best move!



31.♖xf6+

White didn’t have anything better. 31.♕xb7+ ♕d7 and the black pieces are joining the game.

31...gxf6 32.♕h7+ ♔f8 33.♕h8+ ♔f7 34.♕h7+ ♔f8

It seems like White doesn’t have anything, but Mamedyarov finds another resource.

35.♖f1!?

This move leads to a draw anyway, but it places Black in some more trouble first.

35...♘f4!

is the only move that saves the game! There was no other defense to prevent White from playing ♖xf6.

36.♕xh6+ ♔f7

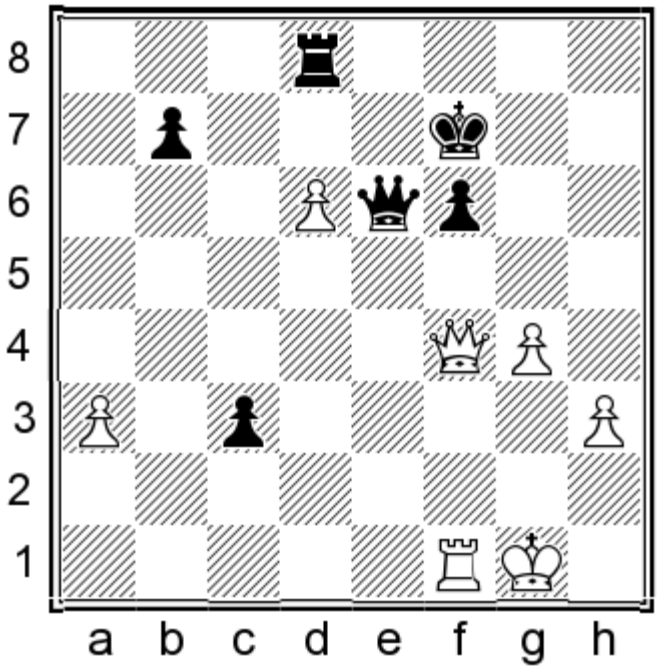
The black king is better placed on f7 than on g8 because of the extra protection of the f6 pawn.

37.♕h7+ ♔f8 38.♕h6+ ♔f7 39.♕xf4

White is a pawn up, but the strong c3 pawn and the open position of the white king gives Black enough play to keep the position equal.

39...♕e6

is the most logical move. Black wants to play ♖xd6 next.



40.♕f3

attacking c3 and b7.

40...♕e5!

Yet another very good move by Black. The queen always threatens to get to g3 from e5, and at the same time it protects the f6 and c3 pawns.

41.♕xb7+

and in fact this position is a total draw. After 41...♔g6 White doesn't have anything better than to play 42.♕b1 ♔g7 43.♕b7 and split the point. A very interesting and exciting game, but what is a bit strange is that the game was played perfectly by both players, with zero mistakes! What a high-level game!

1/2

GAME 42
B. Jobava (2717)
S. Mamedyarov (2764)
Tashkent FIDE GP 2014
Tashkent UZB (11.2)
02.11.2014, [A70]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

When two players like Mamedyarov and Jobava meet over the board, we can expect real fireworks on the board and this is what we get! Mamedyarov would share the first place with a win and Jobava would share 2nd place with a win as well, so this was a high-stakes game!

1.d4

Jobava used to play any opening possible, for example a lot of his games start with 1.b3.

1...♘f6 2.c4

and 2.♘c3 is one of Jobava's favorites as well, but it seems like he is taking this game very seriously and is going for the main lines.

2...c5

An interesting opening choice by Mamedyarov, who more often plays 2...e6 with a solid position, or the Gruenfeld or Slav, but this time it seems like Shakhriyar can't wait to get a fighting position and chooses the Benoni.

3.d5 e6 4.♘c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6

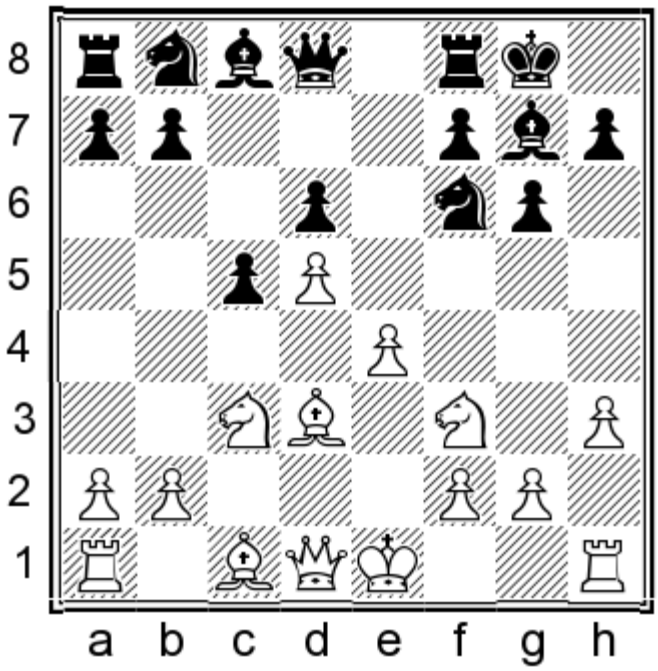
We are in the very main line of the Benoni.

7.♘f3 ♗g7

Jobava goes for one of the most concrete lines and things become pretty forced. Generally the 8.h3 move is made to avoid ♗g4, as in Benoni structures it is usually very good for Black to exchange the c8 bishop for almost any white piece.

8.h3 0-0 9.♗d3

Protecting the e4 pawn for the future.



9...b5

This is one of the main lines. In case Black does not act dynamically, White wants to play 0-0, and on ...a6 he always has a4, so it is not so simple to find a clear future plan for Black. 9...b5 is therefore counted as the most critical reply.

10.♘xb5 ♘xe4

Mamedyarov seems to have been working a lot on the Benoni to be ready to play such a crazy line. Another line is 10...♖e8 11.0-0 a6 12.♘a3 ♘xe4 13.♖e1 ♘f6 14.♖xe8+ ♘xe8 15.♗g5 ♘f6 16.♘c4 and White is a bit better.

11.♗xe4 ♖e8

From now on, things are very forced.

12.♘g5

White needs to protect the e4 bishop.

12...♕a5+

The only way to continue. 12...h6? would be a big mistake because after 13.♘e6 fxe6 14.0-0 White is just winning.

13.♘c3

It seems like White is doing well, but here comes Black's main idea:

13...♗a6!

Of course this is all preparation, but it is an excellent idea anyway! Black is a full piece down and is not trying to recapture it quickly, but is instead playing for the initiative! You don't often see such play!

14.♗d2

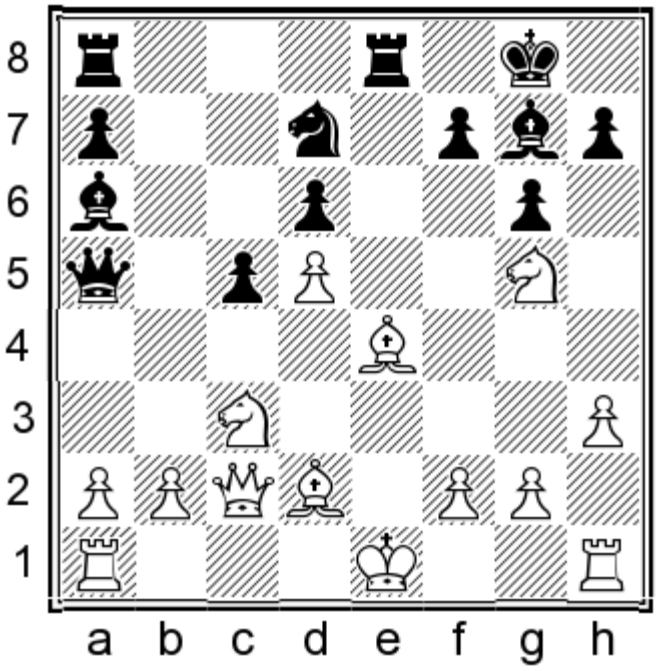
What could be more logical than to protect against ...♗xc3 and at the same time develop a piece and be ready to whisk the white king away from e1 by castling queenside.

14...♘d7

Mamedyarov still doesn't care about winning the piece back and is getting himself fully developed first.

15.♕c2

White is ready to castle queenside.



15...♖ab8!

What a fantastic move! I don’t know if Mamedyarov made it up at the board, or knew it, but we just see a super-rare case where one side is a full piece up, the other side has no direct threats and the position is still very unclear! Black is actually waiting for White to castle queenside and by playing 15...♖ab8 is focusing his pieces on the future direction of the white king. The bishop on g7 and rook on b8 put very dangerous pressure on b2.

16.0-0-0

The white king reaches safety, or at least it seems so...

16...♘e5

Black continues what he started; the knight is going to c4 to create even more pressure on b2, which is actually very dangerous for White. After Jobava played the most logical moves, it is now time to think about how to defend against Black’s threats and we should not forget that White is a full piece up!

17.♖he1!

A very strong move, based on precise calculation.

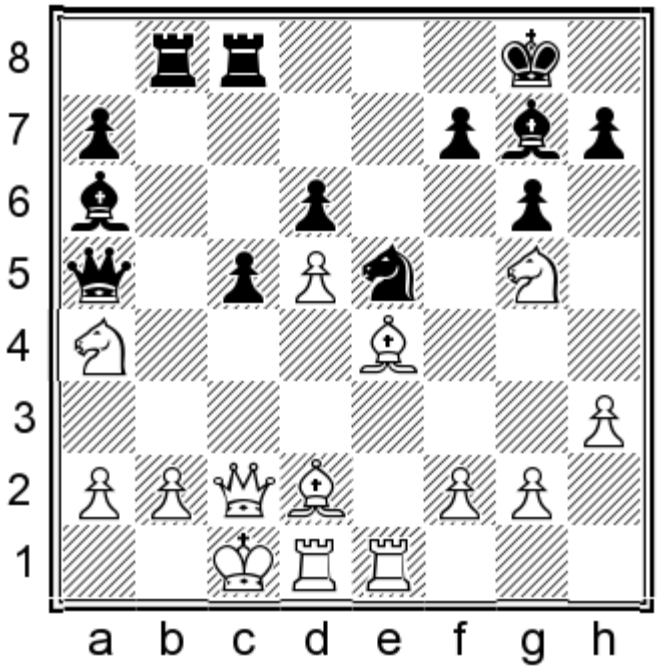
17...♖ec8

Black doesn’t fall into the trap. The first question is of course why not to play 17...♘c4? and the answer is that 18.♗d3!! is an amazingly strong reply. It seems like bad luck, but nothing works for Black, for example: 18...♖xe1 19.♖xe1 ♖xb2 and White’s position may look dangerous, but is in fact just winning! 20.♖e8+ ♗f8 21.♕a4!! and it’s all over.

18.♘a4

Once again Jobava makes the most logical move, attacking the queen on a5 and defending the b2 pawn. Black’s

position seems to be reaching critical condition, but Mamedyarov has another amazing move in mind!



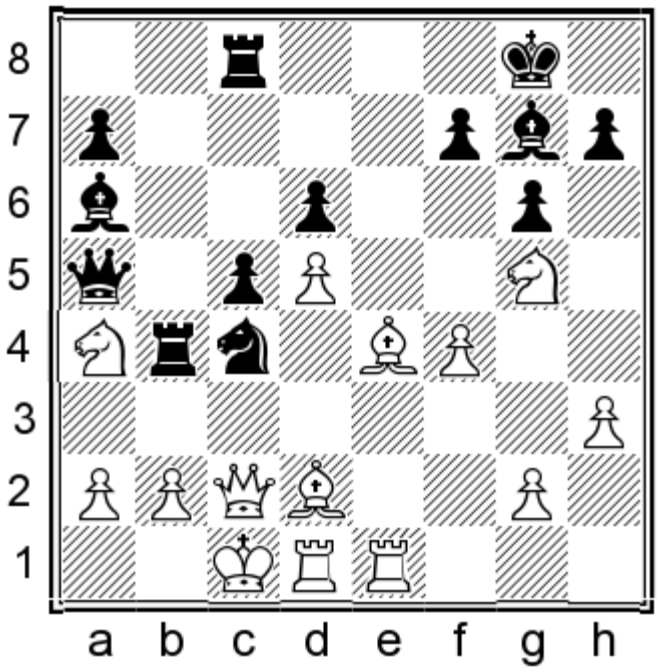
18...♖b4!!

Wow! Black not only defends the queen, but at the same time attacks the a4 knight. A position can't be much more crazy than what we see now!

19.f4

One of the best moves in the position, but White had another interesting option: the silent 19.b3!? looks interesting as well. White's idea is to play ♔b1 next and simply take on b4. 19...♕b5 is probably the main move here, with the idea of playing c4. (Maybe a bit too early would be *19...c4 20.♗xb4 ♕xb4 21.♔b1* and of course the position remains very tactical, but perhaps Black doesn't have enough compensation for the rook.) 20.f4 White has many other moves here as well 20...c4! with a complete mess where it is impossible to say who is better without an in-depth analysis.

19...♘c4



20.♗f5!

A very good move. White chases the rook from c8 in order to take on b4 next. 20.♗xb4 would be premature since after 20...cxb4 Black just has too many threats on the c-file.

20...♖cb8

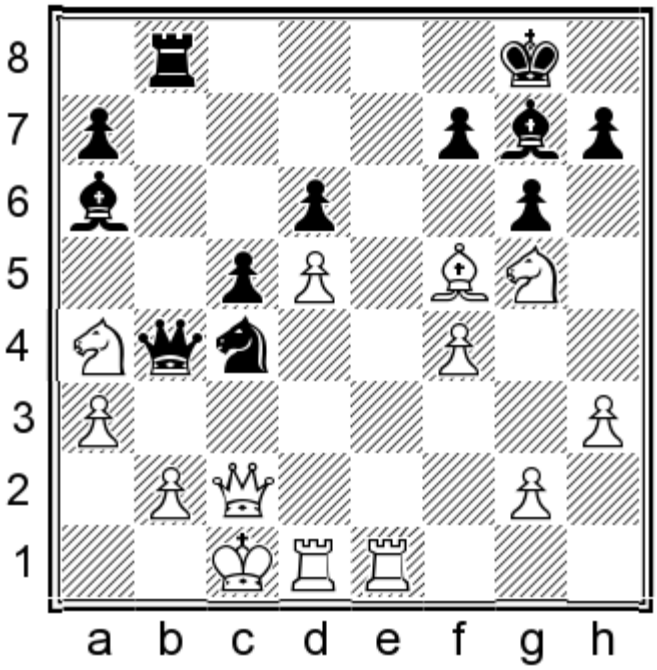
Black can do nothing else. 20...gxf5?? 21.♕xf5 and White is easily winning.

21.♗xb4 ♕xb4

So White is a full rook up, but the position still remains unclear. The pawn on b2 is hanging and the bishop on f5 as well.

22.a3?!

This is the first moment where White goes wrong, as Jobava missed a very strange but very strong reply by Black.



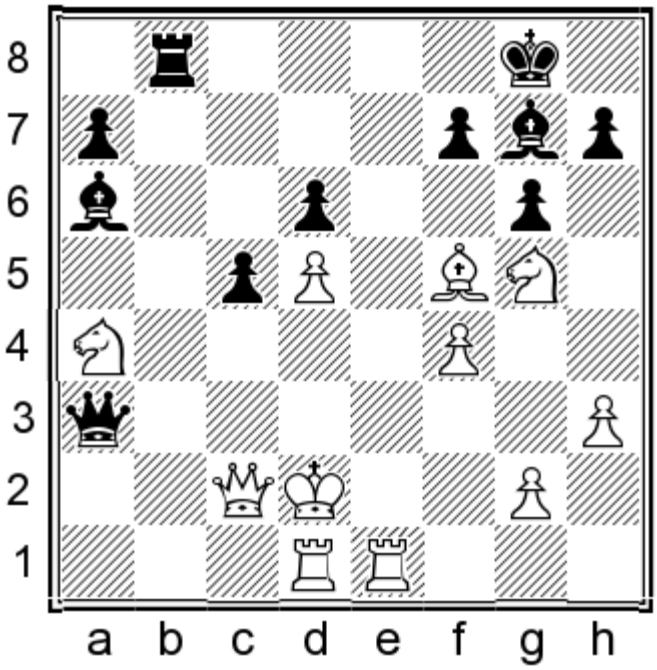
22.♕b3! was probably the best move as now Black can no longer avoid the exchange of queens. 22...gxf5 23.♖e7 and I think being an exchange up should give White some edge. (Black seems to be OK after *23.♕xb4 cxb4 24.b3 ♗b5*)

22...♘xa3!

Of course there is no way back in such a position!

23.bxa3 ♕xa3+ 24.♔d2

White's position seems to be solid and although the white king is exposed on d2, it is hard to see anything direct — but here comes the move that Jobava had clearly under-estimated when playing 22.a3:



24...♕g3!!

What a move! Black is a rook and a piece down and now he makes an unforeseen move after which he is probably better! The main threat is to play ♕xf4 next.

25.♖b1!

The only defense! White is trying to escape by returning some material. After 25.♗d3 ♕xf4+ 26.♖e3 ♗d4 Black is just close to winning. 25.♔c1 was just losing on the spot as after 25...♕xf4+ 26.♖d2 gxf5 27.♘f3 ♕b4 Black mates the white king.

25...♕xf4+

Black starts to regain some material.

26.♔d1 ♖xb1+

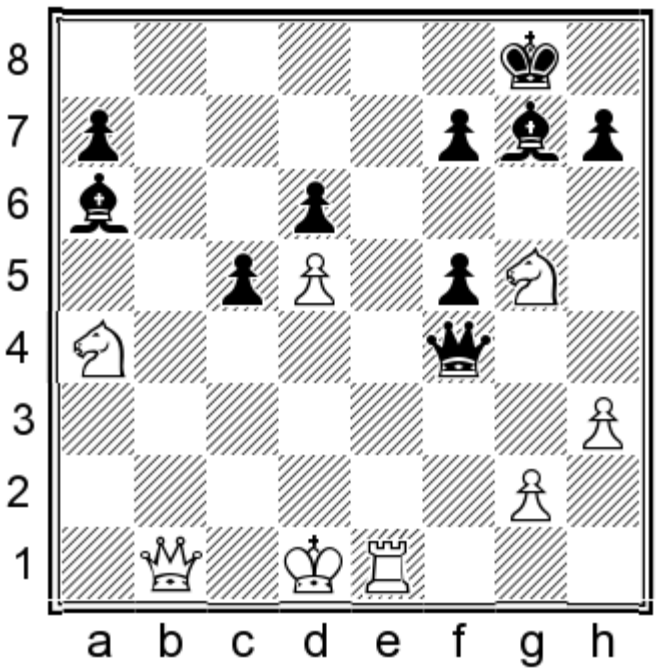
winning the a4 knight.

27.♕xb1

Black gives two checks first.

27...♕d4+ 28.♔c1 ♕f4+ 29.♔d1 gxf5

Mamedyarov is fighting for the 1st place in the Grand Prix!



At first sight 29...♕xa4+ looks very strong, but now we enter a long forced line: 30.♕c2 ♕d4+ 31.♕d2 ♕a1+ 32.♕c1 Black has nothing better than to enter the endgame by playing 32...♕xc1+ 33.♔xc1 and after the nice move 33...♗h6! the position remains very forced. 34.♖e8+ ♔g7 35.h4 gxf5 Black has 3 pawns for the exchange, but White has good chances to escape after 36.♖e7 followed by ♖d7, and the outcome of the game would probably be a draw anyway.

30.♖e8+

Jobava gets rid of the monster bishop on g7.

30...♗f8

Both knights are hanging.

31.♘xc5!

This is the only move with which White can escape to draw territory!

31...♕d4+

31...dxc5 32.♕b8! This was the idea behind ♘xc5! 32...♕d4+ 33.♔e1 ♕g1+ 34.♔d2 ♕d4+ with a perpetual check.

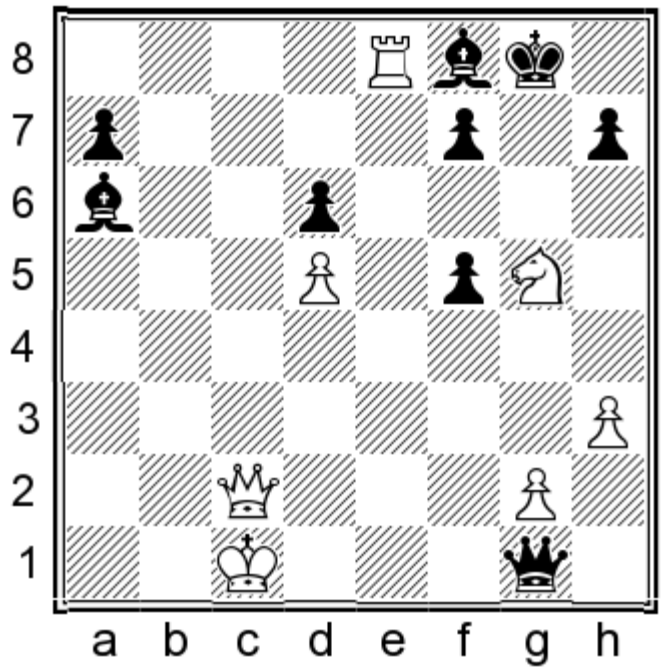
32.♔c1!

The only move which holds the draw!

32...♕xc5+ 33.♕c2

The white queen joins the defense.

33...♕g1+ 34.♕d1 ♕c5+ 35.♕c2 ♕g1+



36.♕d1

Black has nothing better than making a draw...

36...♕xg2

The last try, but it doesn’t change anything any longer of course.

37.♕h5

the safest move.

37...♕g1+

and Black forces a draw by perpetual check. What an amazing game and what fantastic calculation by both players who played an almost perfect game in a very complicated position, with a lot of possible continuations!

1/2

GAME 43
A. Korobov (2680)
V. Ivanchuk (2726)
83rd ch-UKR 2014 Lviv UKR (11.3)
22.11.2014, [E15]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We are now going to see an extremely wild game, which is maybe to be expected when Korobov and Ivanchuk meet, since both are very creative and fighting players. After the opening, Ivanchuk managed to obtain a very promising position thanks to a great exchange sacrifice, but in time-trouble he misses his chance to convert his advantage and the game ends in a draw.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6

A very solid opening choice from Ivanchuk, who simply plays every conceivable opening!

4.g3 ♗a6 5.b3 ♗b4+ 6.♗d2

The provocation of the bishop to d2 looks strange, but in fact it is clearly the main line. The white bishop belongs on b2 and not on d2, which is a good place for the b1-knight.

6...♗e7 7.♗g2 c6

Black of course wants to play d5 next. Another main line is 7...d5 8.cxd5.

8.♗c3 d5 9.♘bd2

White often used to play 9.♘e5 first.

9...♘bd7

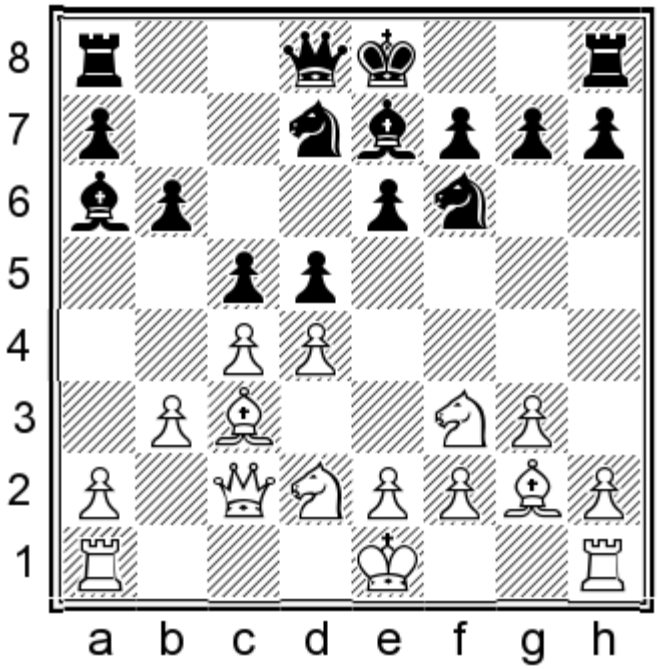
Black is preparing c5, which is the main idea of this line.

10.♕c2

Does Korobov really want to castle queenside? Or is this move made to play e4 next?!

10...c5!

Ivanchuk doesn’t waste any time and attacks the white center. The white queen can be pretty badly placed on c2 because of the upcoming ♖c8 move.



11.dxc5

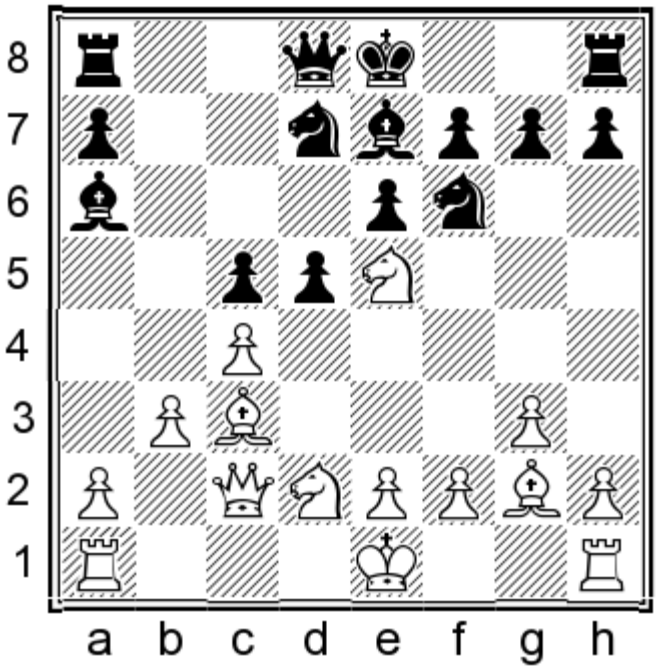
White tries to unbalance the position. On the simple 11.0-0 ♖c8 the exchanges in the center would lead to a pretty equal position.

11...bxc5

This is the right choice. Another easy choice could have been 11...♘xc5 12.cxd5 and Black gets an isolated pawn. 12...exd5 (*12...♘xd5 13.♗xg7*) 13.♘d4 and I think that Black's position is fine as well, but sometimes it is not so pleasant to play such a pawn structure, knowing that theoretically it could be a dangerous position because of the weak pawn on d5.

12.♘e5

Another aggressive move by Korobov.



12.e3 to avoid d4 would have been a much more solid choice, with a roughly equal position.

12...d4!

Ivanchuk plays a great positional exchange sacrifice! This is clearly something we should remember for our own games.

13.♘xd7

This move is forced.

13...♘xd7 14.♗a5

Another forced move.

14...♕c8 15.♗xa8

White needs to take the exchange otherwise after ...♗b7 Black would just be much better.

15...♕xa8 16.f3

This move looks a bit strange to me. Why not castle queenside first?! Maybe the reason is to save a tempo on the f3 move. 16.0-0-0 After 16.0-0 an attempt to attack immediately is 16...h5 (*16...0-0 17.a3* and White is probably better.) 17.e4 h4 and I think White's position looks really dangerous.

16...0-0 17.0-0-0

So which plan to choose now for Black?!

17...♗b7!

Another very good positional move. Before starting to push the f- and e-pawns, Black tries to improve the position of his pieces as much as possible, because any opening of a file could be a disaster for Black since the white rooks would

immediately win on ‘power’ alone.

18.♖hf1 f5

Black’s pawns start to roll. He just wants to play e5-e4 next.

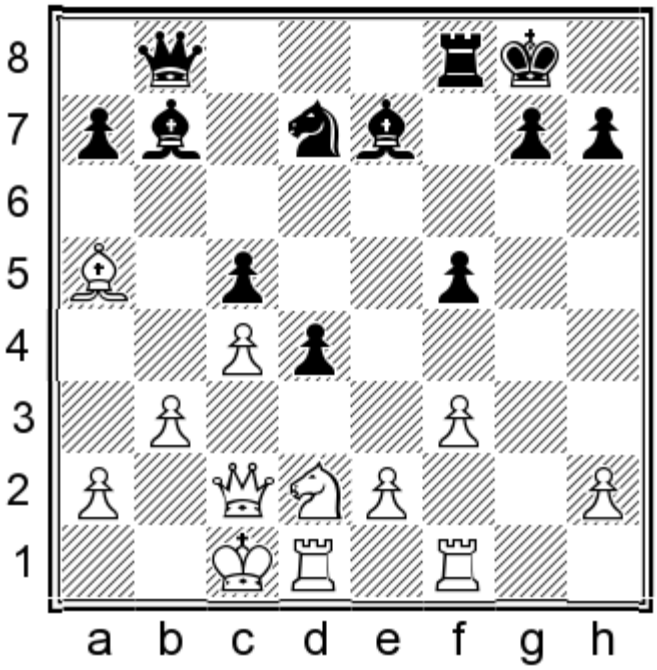
19.g4!

A good decision. Korobov looks for counter chances, as to sit and wait for e5-e4 is not an option. But as we can see, White is already under quite a lot of pressure despite being a clear exchange up! What a deep understanding of chess Ivanchuk has, to give up an exchange for such slow play!

19...♕b8

The black queen joins the game and naturally Black is trying to keep the position as closed as possible.

20.gxf5 exf5



21.b4!?

Very creative play by White. Many other players would probably have chosen to play something like 21.♖f2, trying to be as solid as possible. But not Korobov, who doesn’t like to be under pressure of getting squeezed and instead looks for chances in an open fight.

21...♗g5

The black bishop on e3 is going to be a beast! The position after 21...cxb4 22.♘b3 ♘e5 is very unclear but at least now White has a clear plan of what to do next.

22.♔b1 ♗c6

Black continues the strategy of keeping the position as closed as possible, allowing White to play b5 now, after which

the white rooks would have no open files.

23.♘b3

and White does his best to open the d-file.

23...♗a4 24.♔b2

Does Korobov want to play his king to a3? Maybe he is trying to chase the bishop from a4, but it is extremely risky.

24...♕b7

Perhaps this move was already too slow? Moves such as 24...cxb4 followed by ...♘c5 or just ...♗e3 would have given Black a clear advantage in my opinion.

25.f4!

White is using the fact that Black can't play ♗f6.

25...♗e7

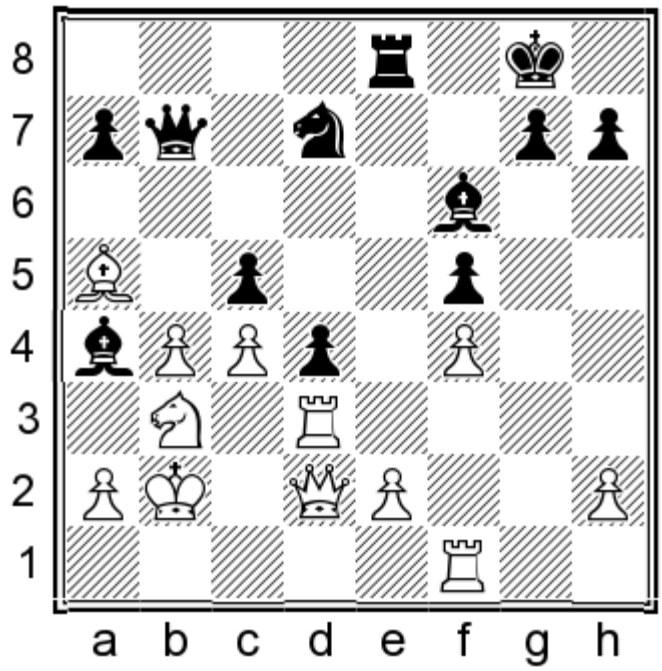
Not falling into the trap... 25...♗f6? would be a big mistake because after 26.♕xf5 d3+ 27.♔b1 dxe2 White has this little check: 28.♕e6+! ♔h8 29.♕xe2 with a big advantage for White.

26.♖d3 ♖e8

Ivanchuk spots the weakness in White's position and this is the e2 pawn.

27.♕d2 ♗f6

All black pieces are perfectly placed.



28.♔a3?

This move gives Black the chance of practically winning the game in 2 moves. White should have continued with 28.♖g1 taking the g2 square under control, but Black's position is clearly much better anyway.

28...♕a6?

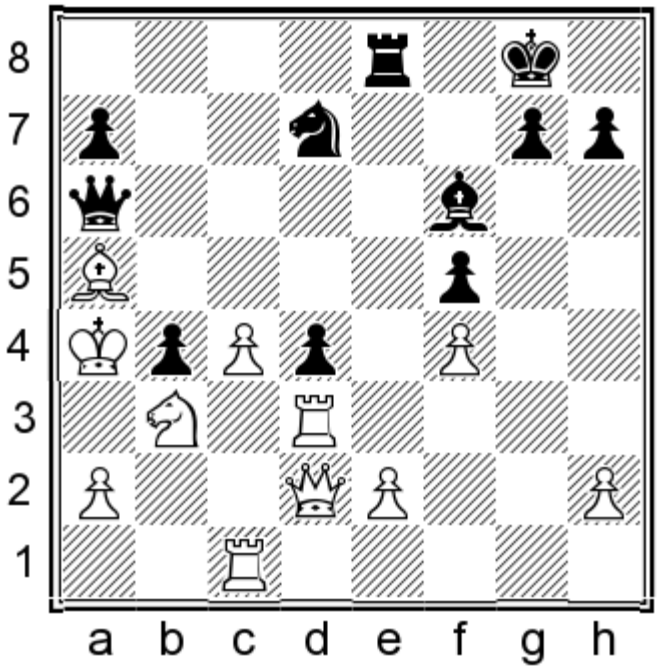
This is clearly not the best move. The simple 28...♗xb3 29.axb3 ♕g2 would almost put an end to the game, as White can't hold the e2 pawn. 30.♖e1 ♗h4 and Black is just winning.

29.♖c1

After 29.b5 Black has a slow move like 29...♕e6 which leads to a nice position, but he can also play 29...♗xb5!? 30.cxb5 ♕xb5 threatening to play c4 next, with a total mess!

29...cxb4+ 30.♗xb4

30.♔xa4 is losing on the spot because



30...♖b8! comes with the deadly threat of playing ...♕c6 next.

30...♗xb3+ 31.♔xb3 ♖b8

The game seems to be almost over, but Korobov keeps on finding the only moves.

32.a3!

is the only way to continue!

32...♘c5+ 33.♔a2 ♘e4!

A good choice. If 33...♘xd3 34.exd3 Black's position should be a bit better, but the white c-pawn gives him good chances to survive.

34.♕b2!

Once again Korobov grabs his only chance and this is to give up his queen!

34...♘c3+

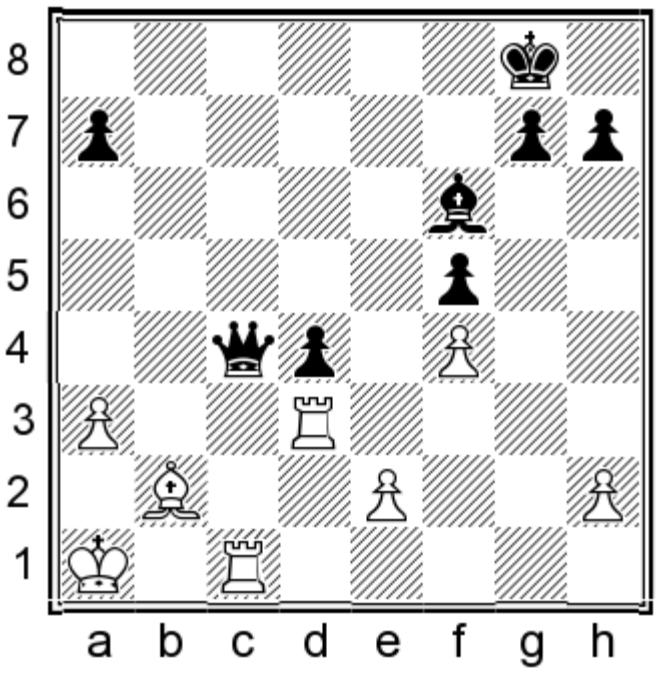
too tempting not to play it...

35.♗xc3 ♕xc4+

This pawn of course had to be taken.

36.♔a1 ♖xb2 37.♗xb2

So now we have a very interesting position. White has 2 rooks for the queen and a pawn, which is materially speaking around equal, but the black king's position is very safe, while the white king is exposed. Also, the pawns on e2, f4 and h2 could be potential targets, all of which clearly gives Black some edge here.



37...♕e6

It is hard to say whether to give up the d4 pawn was the best decision. Black didn't need to hurry and could just have played 37...♕a4 followed by ...h6-♔h7 and then let's see what happens.

38.♗xd4

Of course White needs to take his chance.

38...♕xe2 39.♖cd1 ♗xd4+ 40.♖xd4 ♕xh2

Ivanchuk makes the right choice on move 40. After 40...h6 White has the very strong 41.♖1d2 and now both the f4 and h2 pawns are protected and it is going to be very hard for Black to improve his position, which is probably just a draw now.

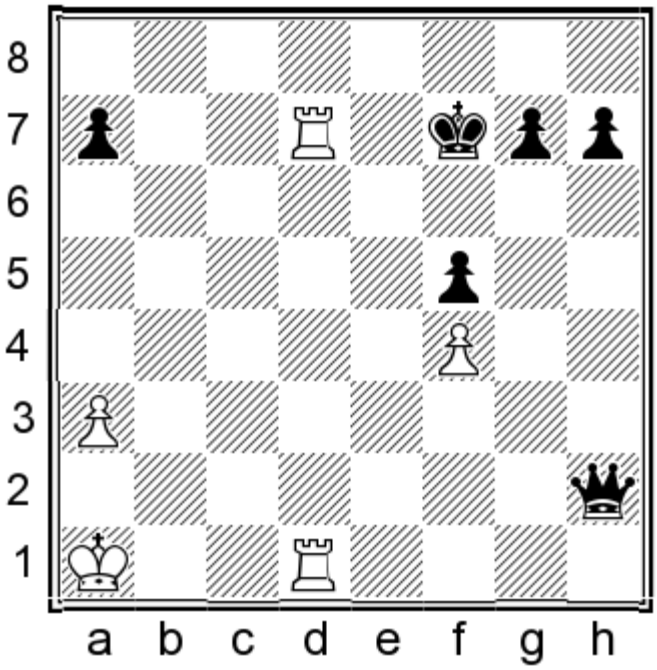
41.♖d8+

The only move. White needs to do something right now — or just resign because the Black pawns would start to roll.

41...♔f7 42.♖8d7+ ♔g8

Ivanchuk starts to repeat the moves, but why?! After 42...♔g6 43.♖1d6+ ♔h5 44.♖xg7 h6 Blacks seems to keep good winning chances and is clearly not risking anything. 45.♖d1 ♕h3 46.♔b2 ♕f3 followed by ♔h4-h5, kh3-h4 etc. White would need to show excellent defense to save the game here.

43.♖d8+ ♔f7 44.♖8d7+



44...♔g8

It is a bit of a pity that such a great and interesting game ends in such a draw, especially for Ivanchuk who played fantastically, but missed an easy win once and later on could not convert his advantage.

1/2

GAME 44
G. Kasparov (2812)
N. Short (2664)
Legends Rapid Match 2015 Saint Louis USA (1)
25.04.2015, [E11]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Kasparov completely destroyed Short in an exhibition match in Saint Louis. The final score was 8.5–1.5. We will examine the first game, where Kasparov was already displaying huge domination, but Short put up tenacious resistance and somehow survived...

1.d4 e6 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 ♗b4+

The Bogo Indian defense.

4.♘bd2

This has recently been considered to be the more ambitious answer. White would like to get the bishop pair after a3. The other main line is 4.♗d2.

4...c5 5.a3 ♗xd2+ 6.♕xd2

In the long-term, White has achieved a positional advantage. The two bishops might guarantee him an edge.

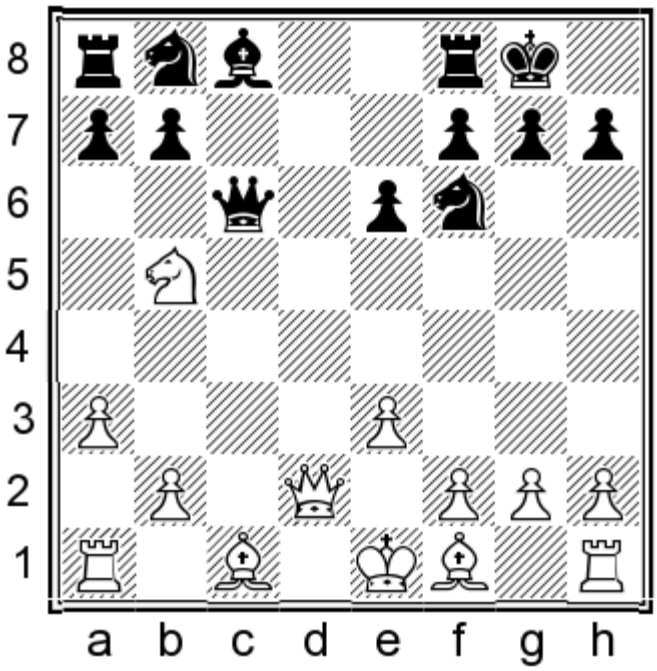
6...cxd4 7.♘xd4 0-0 8.e3 d5 9.cxd5

Kasparov opens the position to make his two bishops more powerful. Another positionally-principled move was played recently by GM Vitiugov: 9.b3 with the idea of developing the bishop to the long diagonal and delaying the movement of the f1 bishop to avoid losing a tempo after dxc4.

9...♕xd5 10.♘b5

White would happily enter an endgame without queens, but Short rightly keeps them on board and maintains the pressure on the g2 pawn, to make the development of the white pieces more difficult.

10...♕c6!



11.f3!

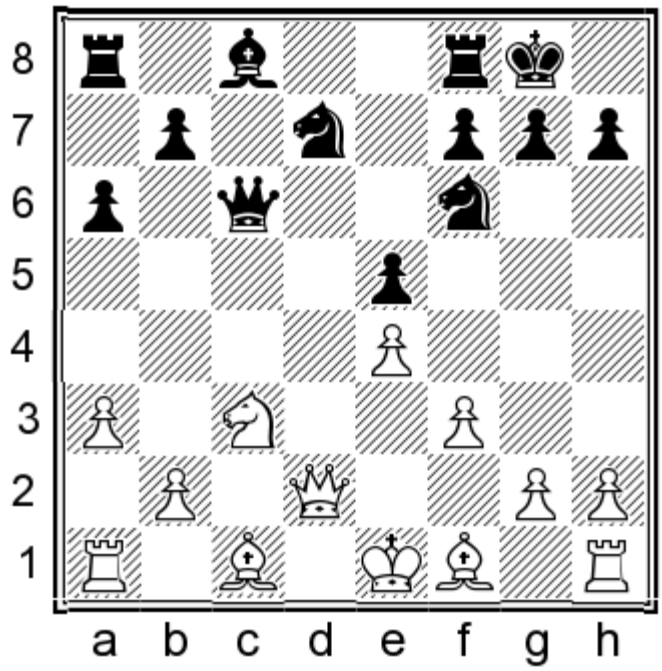
A very clever move! White not only shuts down the pressure on the g2 pawn, but he also prevents the ...♘e4 tempo in some lines and prepares to push e3-e4, establishing control over the center and the active squares of the f6 knight. He will also be able to develop the c1 bishop ideally to e3 afterwards. Black quickly needs to do something to gain some counterplay.

11...a6 12.♘c3!

It was tempting to retreat the knight with tempo by playing 12.♘d4?! but after 12...♕b6 the knight has no stability on d4. Black attacks it with e5 and it will need to occupy an unfortunate square. 13.♗e2 e5 and ...♘c6 and ...♖d8 are coming next with tempo.

12...e5 13.e4 ♘bd7?!

This is clearly the mistake which allows White to get an advantage. The idea is to quickly play ...♘c5-b3 (and prepare it with ...♗e6 if necessary) or in case of b4- ...♘b6, ...♗e6 and the c4 square is weak. However Kasparov finds a perfect way to ignore these ideas!



Black should have played 13...♗e6! and after the same plan we will see in the game... 14.♕f2 ♗b3! controlling the most valuable open file. 15.♗e2 ♕e6! The black knight should ideally develop to c6 and its final destination is on d4! 16.0-0 ♘c6 17.♗e3 ♖fd8= and Black had enough counterplay against the two bishops in the game Gelfand-Andreikin, Moscow 2013.

14.♕f2!

Kasparov does not weaken his pawn structure with b4 (which also abandons the stability of the c3 knight), but he quickly moves away on the dark squares and ignores the b3 knight.

14...♘c5 15.♗e3! ♘b3 16.♖d1

Very well played! We can see now that the b3 knight is not doing that much and Black had a far better version in the 13...♗e6 line.

16...♗e6 17.♗e2

White has consolidated his position and it is now time to finish development and enjoy the power of the two bishops.

17...♖fd8 18.0-0 ♘e8

Black would like to play ♘d6-c4, but this maneuver takes some time, which allows White to create problems of a

different kind...

19.♕g3!

Kasparov provokes a weakness before opening a new battle front. 19.f4! immediately was also very strong. 19...exf4 20.♕xf4 followed by ♗f3 and ♘d5 with very active piece play.

19...f6 20.f4!

White has the two bishops and he wants to open the position for them!

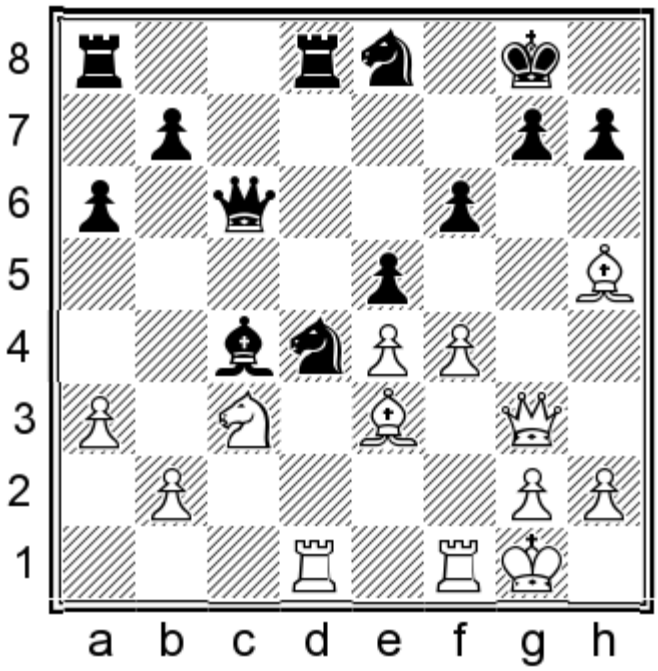
20...♘d4

Short tries to show the drawback of having included the ♕g3-f6 moves. 20...exf4 21.♕xf4 would be even better than one move before. Now not only ♗f3-♘d5 is threatened, but also e5 with a very dangerous attack.

21.♗h5!

White does not give up his bishops and piles more-and-more pressure on Black's kingside.

21...♗c4



According to the computer, the only move to stay in the game was 21...♕c5! threatening the h5 bishop with an x-ray and stabilizing the very important e5 square. White's advantage is undisputable anyway with the two bishops. He can take twice on e5 followed by ♗g5 for instance.

22.fxe5!

Kasparov sacrificed the exchange without thinking. He feels the domination and the dynamism so well that he knows that the compensation will be more than enough... White gets a pawn for it, all his pieces are placed perfectly, the black king is vulnerable and after the disappearance of the c4 bishop, another great piece comes to the game as White plays ♘d5!

22...♗xf1 23.♖xf1 ♔h8

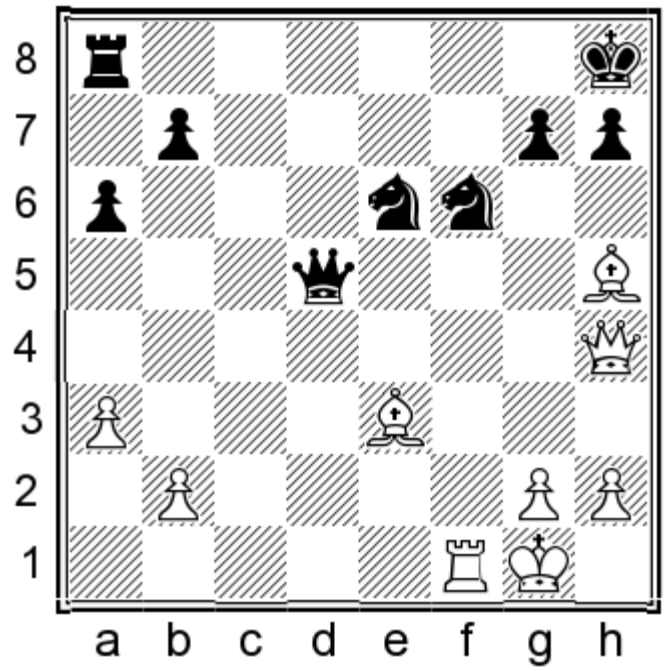
The best defense. Escaping from ♘d5-e7 and the pin on the g-file which made the recapture on f6 after ♗xe8 and exf6 impossible. 23...fxe5 24.♕xe5 ♘c2 25.♘d5+–

24.♘d5!

A devastating attack is about to break through. Short finds the only way again to avoid immediate resignation and gives back his material advantage...

24...♖xd5! 25.exd5 ♕xd5 26.♕f2?

This move looked very tempting, but some miraculous defensive resources by Short allow him to survive. Kasparov pointed out that he should have played 26.♕h4! ♘e6 27.exf6 ♘xf6



28.♖xf6! gxf6 29.♕xf6+ ♘g7

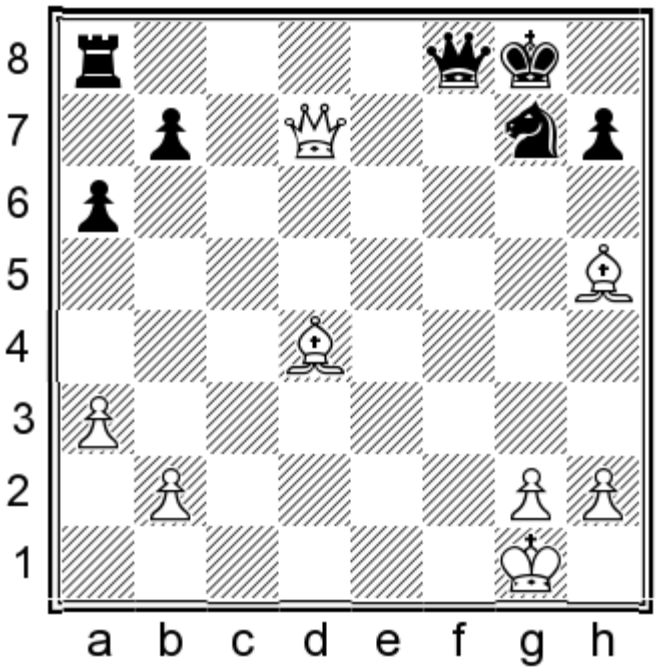
(*29...♔g8 30.♗f7++–*)

30.♗d4! The two bishops are extremely powerful in such positions. In comparison to the game, the dark squared bishop is now standing on the long diagonal from where it controls much more squares than from h6. 30...♕g8 The only move.

(*30...♖g8 31.♗f7+–; 30...♕d7 31.♗f7 ♕g4 32.h3 ♕g3 33.♗e5!* and Black cannot save the g7 knight. *33...♕e1+ 34.♔h2+–*)

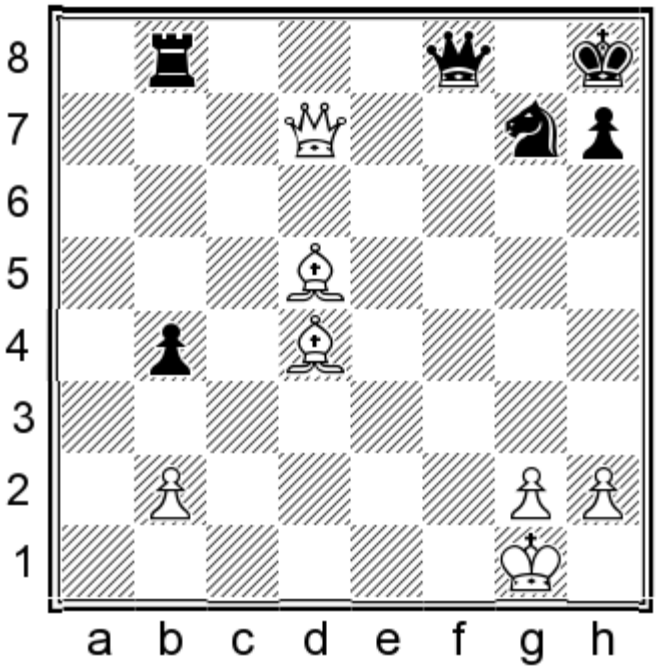
31.♕e7! Black is totally dominated and in danger of getting into zugzwang. Here are some illustrative lines to illustrate the power of the white pieces: 31...b5 Saving the b-pawn.

(*31...♖c8* aiming for counterplay. *32.♗g4* 32.♕xb7 is also winning. *32...♖c1+ 33.♔f2 ♖c2+ 34.♔f3+–* White has run out of checks and ...♗e6 is coming next, deflecting the queen from the g7 knight. *31...♕f8* White obviously keeps the queens on the board. *32.♕d7 ♔g8*



33.♗d1! Sending the king back to the corner after which the advance of the h-pawn will decide the game. *33...♕f7* loses to the small tactical trick *34.♗b3! ♕xb3 35.♕xg7#*)

32.♗g4 ♕f8 33.♕d7 White controls all the squares of the rook since ...♖e8 or ...♖d8 loses to ♗xg7 and the winning plan is the following: 33...a5 34.♗e6 b4 35.♗d5 ♖b8 36.axb4 axb4



37.g4! with the idea of g5-h4-h5-h6! and if Black tries to prevent it with 37...h6 then 38.g5! hxg5 39.♕h3# is mate!

26...fxe5!

Cold-blooded defense! Kasparov could probably not believe his eyes that with such pieces and back-rank problems he did not have an instant win.

27.♕f8+

Black's point is that after 27.♗xd4 ♘f6!! this intermediate move takes back one of the bishops and in the meantime he solves the back rank problems.(*27...exd4 28.♗f3*± and ♗xb7 next or ♕xd4 would have been good for White.)

27...♕g8 28.♕e7 ♘f6!

The only move again to avoid ♖f8.

29.♖xf6!

Kasparov finds a brilliant exchange sacrifice again, but this time it does not have the same efficacy as in the 26.♕h4 line. 29.♕xe5 again runs into an intermediate move: 29...♘c6! and Black takes on h5 next with more or less equality.

29...gxf6 30.♗h6!

The game seems to be over, but Black has an only move yet again... 30.♕xf6+? ♕g7 is nothing.

30...♘f5! 31.♕xf6+ ♘g7

Amazing defense by Black!

32.♕xe5 ♖c8

White's pieces are nicely situated, but it is very difficult to make progress. Black is ready to solve the tension on g7 with ...♖c6. ...♕f8-c5 is another idea. White is not in danger of losing the game, but the win looks equally far away. Probably the correct evaluation is something like 'dynamically balanced'.

33.♗f3

Preventing ...♖c6 but it allows Black to emerge from the big squeeze with

33...♕f7! 34.h3

Opening the back rank.

34...b5 35.♗e4

It was probably better to transfer the bishop to the long diagonal with 35.♗d2 but Black also gets his counterplay here with 35...♕e6. The trade of queens would solve the problems forever... 36.♕d4 ♕c4 37.♕f6 ♕e6 38.♕f4 ♕c4=

35...♖e8!

Another very nice resource.

36.♕d4

36.♗xg7+? is met by 36...♔g8! and only on the next move recapturing on g7. Black would have managed to get rid of the bishop pair this way.

36...♕e7

Further squeezing back the white pieces with ...♕e5!

37.b4 ♕e5 38.♕d7!

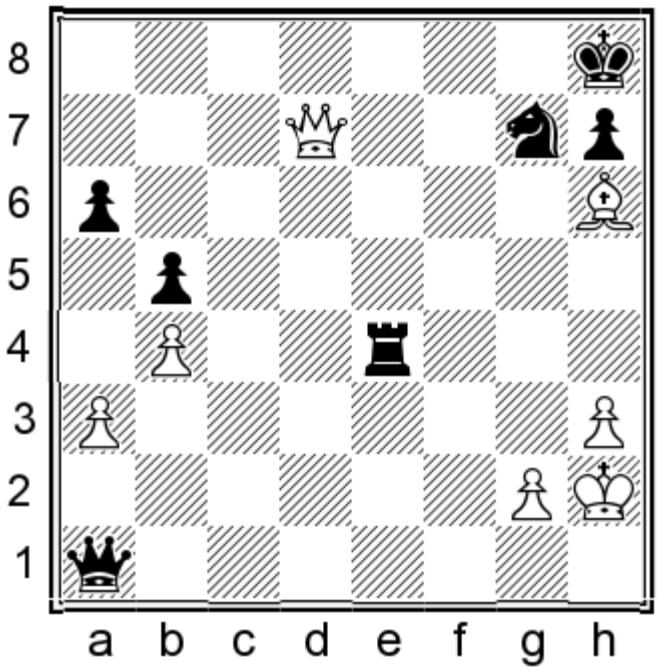
White still cannot trade queens, but his compensation is only enough for equality.

38...♕a1+

38...♖e7 39.♕c8+ ♖e8 also forces the draw.

39.♔h2 ♖xe4

or 39...♕e5+, also with a draw.



It is already White who must save the game and he did it by playing

40.♗xg7+! ♕xg7 41.♕d8+ ♕g8 42.♕f6+ ♕g7 43.♕d8+ ♕g8

Black cannot avoid perpetual check. Draw agreed. An excellent fighting game!

1/2

GAME 45
M. Vachier-Lagrave (2754)
B. Gelfand (2744)
KM FIDE GP 2015 Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (1)
14.05.2015, [B30]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

The final stage of the Grand Prix series and we can expect a big fight for the two qualification places in the Candidates tournament. The main contenders are Tomashevsky, Caruana and Nakamura, but Gelfand and Jakovenko also have their chances.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6

Gelfand heads for his favorite Sicilian Sveshnikov Defense, but Vachier Lagrave prefers to play the Rossolimo, the main alternative for avoiding the main lines...

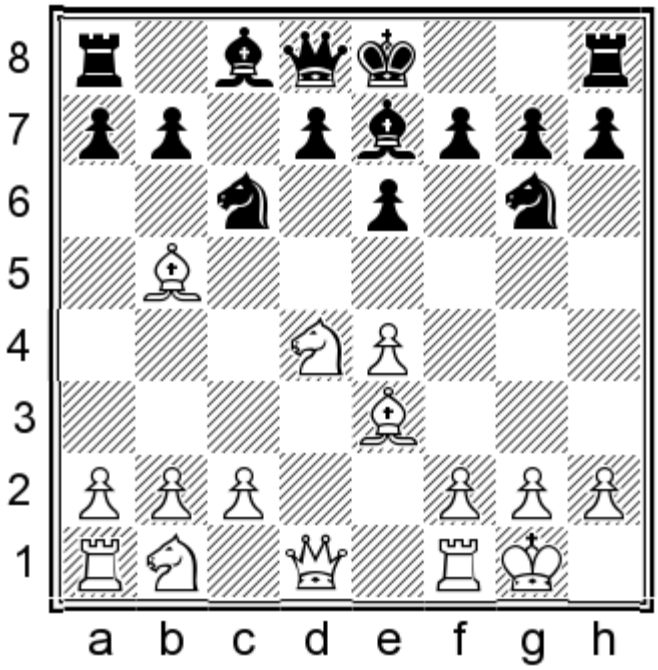
3.♗b5 e6 4.0-0 ♘ge7 5.d4

This side line became popular after Caruana beat Gelfand in 2013. The most common moves are 5.♖e1, 5.c3, 5.♘c3 or 5.b3.

5...cxd4 6.♘xd4

The character of the game has changed and now it is like an Open Sicilian. However, both sides have a misplaced piece; the bishop on b5 is unnatural, since White does not want to take on c6, but the knight on e7 might also look a bit strange, since in most of the Sicilians it belongs on f6.

6...♘g6 7.♗e3 ♗e7



8.♗e2!

Regrouping the misplaced bishop! White loses a tempo, but we can say that the ♘e7-g6 maneouvre also drops a tempo compared to developing it simply to f6. White usually continues with c4, ♘c3 aiming for a space advantage and he did not want to exclude his bishop from the game by keeping it on b5.

8...0-0 9.♘c3

This is the novelty prepared by Vachier-Lagrave. He wants to play a standard Sicilian (not a hedgehog-type game after 9.c4) and he hopes that the knight on g6 is going to be misplaced in the future — and to make use of it with the f4-f5 attacking plan.

9...a6

A typical Sicilian move. Black takes control of the b5 square and intends to develop his bishop to the long diagonal

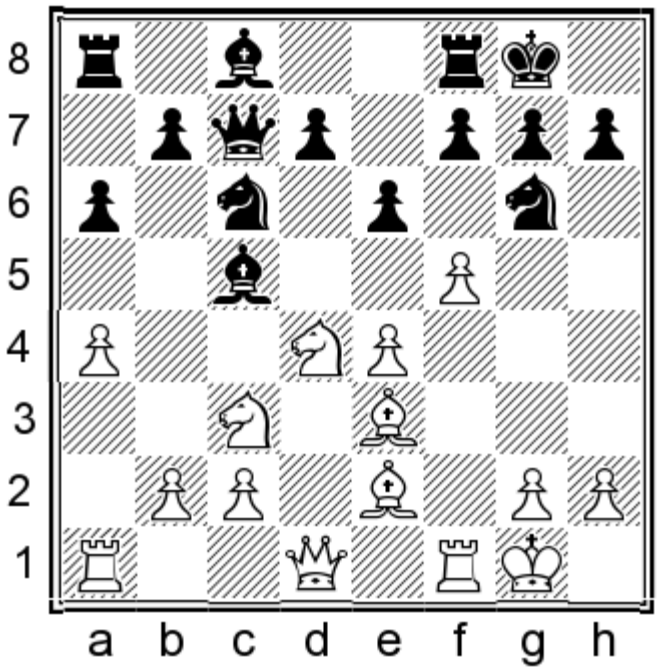
with ...♘xd4 followed by ...b5-♗b7.

10.a4

Preventing this plan.

10...♕c7 11.♘b3

White wanted to play f4, but it failed tactically. 11.f4 was strongly met by 11...♗c5! and suddenly White cannot really deal with the pin on the a7-g1 diagonal. Black is threatening to take on d4 and then on f4! 12.f5



12...♕e5! a very nice motif! Black wins a pawn after all. 13.fxg6 hxg6! and Black wins back the sacrificed piece next move.

11...b6

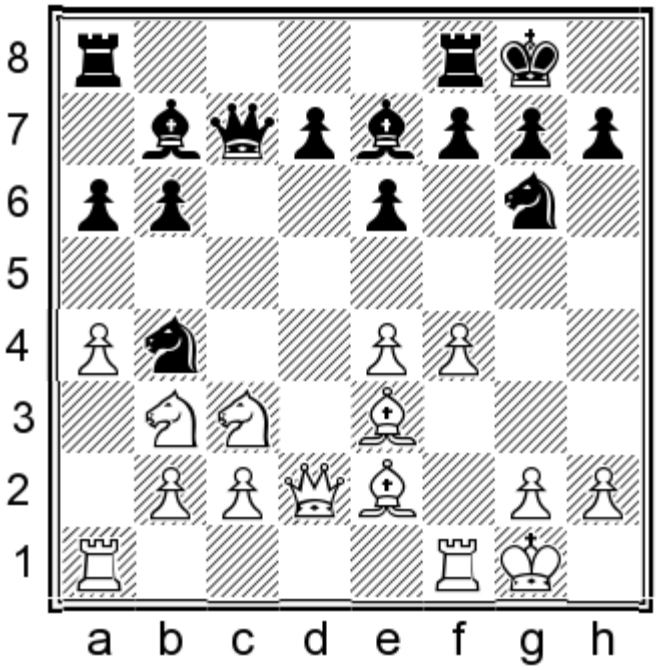
Another standard Sicilian move. White had the positional threat of pushing a5, squeezing Black on the queenside, therefore he prevents it and intends to develop his bishop to b7.

12.f4 ♗b7

This is the difference between having the knight on g6 and not on f6. With the knight on f6, Black must always count with e5: usually it is better to prevent it with d6, but with the knight on g6, e5 makes no sense because it can be effectively undermined by ...d6 or ...f6 and White's center falls apart. The only existing attacking idea is to push f5, but White must prepare for this break, otherwise Black simple installs his knight on e5 and he will be completely fine.

13.♕d2

13.f5 is premature because of 13...♘ge5. When I was following this game, I expected 13.♕e1 with the idea of f5, and on ...♘ge5 then ♕g3 — or the other point could be to attack the b6 pawn with ♕f2. However this move has a drawback as well, in that it leaves the c2 pawn unprotected, so 13...♘b4! 14.♕d2



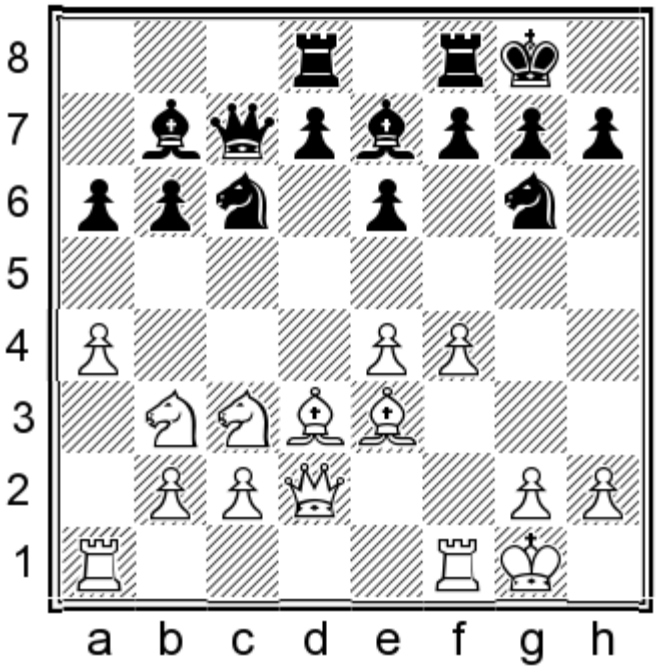
14...f5! This is another big difference of having the knight on g6. Black suddenly launches strong counterplay on the long diagonal 15.exf5 ♘h4! and Black takes over the initiative.

13...♖ad8!

I like this move a lot! The standard placement of the rook in this kind of Open Sicilians is on c8, but Gelfand must adapt his play to the new circumstances with the knight on g6, and he places his rooks to support different kinds of central breaks — with ...d5 or ...f5.

14.♗d3

Creating the hidden threat of ♕f2, winning the b6 pawn. Black must react actively.

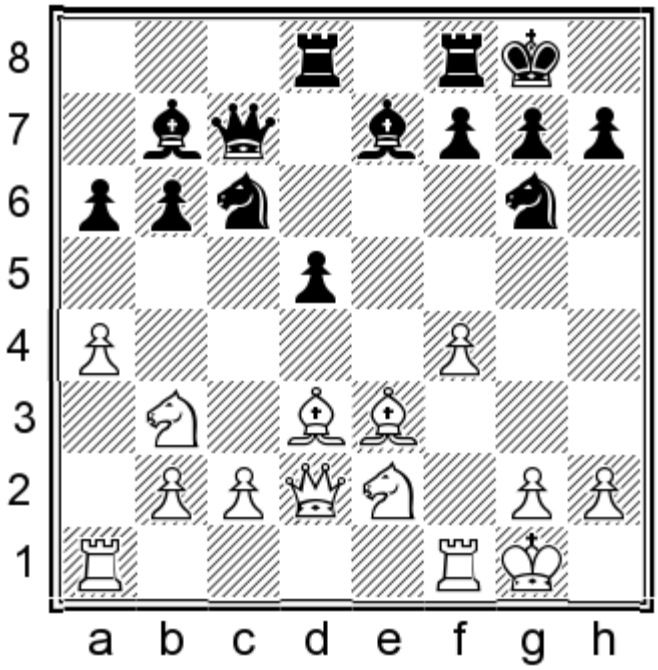


14...d5!

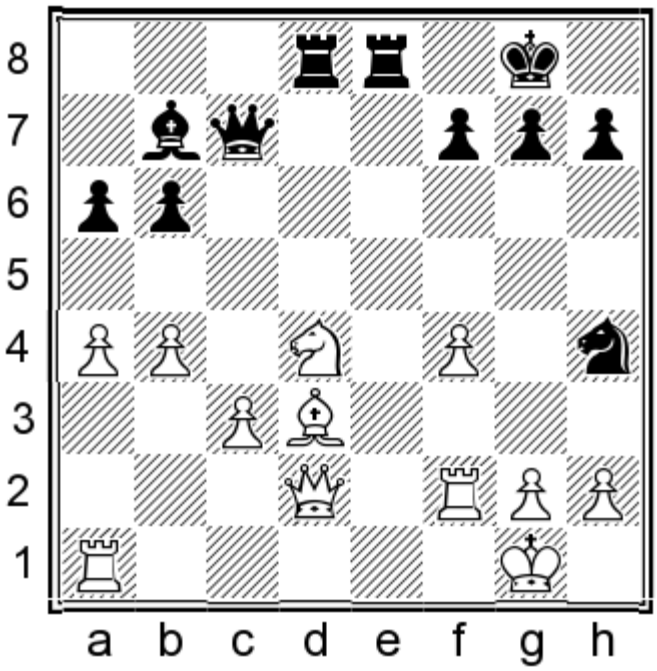
Very well played by Gelfand! Black creates an isolated pawn and also closes off his bishop on the long diagonal, but he gets very active piece-play in return.

15.exd5 exd5 16.f5

Vachier-Lagrave tries to refute Black's idea tactically. Blockading the pawn with 16.♘d4 is met by 16...♗c5! followed by ...♖fe8 with strong pressure on the white pieces. The most principled move was 16.♘e2

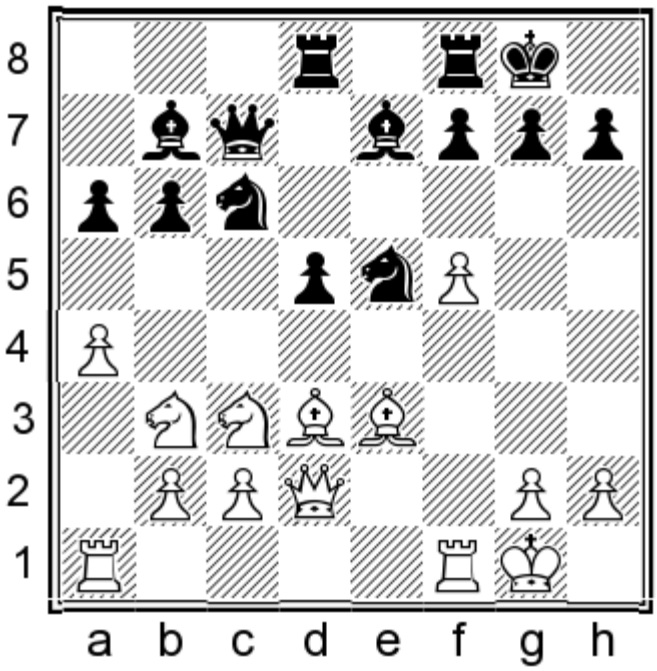


Trying to establish a blockade on the d4 square, keeping the b7-bishop locked up. However Black has the very strong reply of 16...d4! — a tempting pawn sacrifice with the idea of opening the long diagonal and creating threats against the g2 square. 17.♘bxd4 ♘h4! 18.♖f2 ♗c5 It is clear, that Black has huge compensation for the sacrificed pawn. 19.c3 ♖fe8 All the black pieces stand perfectly. An illustrative line to demonstrate their power is 20.b4 ♗xd4 21.♗xd4 ♘xd4 22.♘xd4



22...♗xg2! 23.♖xg2 ♖xd4! and ...♘f3 forks the queen. It does the job even if White takes on h7 and captures the rook with the queen.

16...♘ge5



17.f6! ♗xf6 18.♖xf6!

This exchange sacrifice was the point behind the last 2 moves. Otherwise White would have merely weakened his own squares, but now he wants to destroy Black's pawn structure in front of his king.

18...d4!?

A very clever practical decision. Instead of accepting the sacrifice and entering into a very shaky position with an unclear outcome, Gelfand prefers to simplify the position. After a forced line he ends up a pawn down, but he gets excellent compensation (and a safe king's position), which will secure the draw. Let's see where the complications lead after 18...gxf6 19.♕f2! ♘xd3!

(*19...♘g4* seems to be strong at first sight, however White has an unpleasant intermediate move after *20.♕h4 ♕xh2+! 21.♕xh2 ♘xh2* this would be the point and Black forks with ...d4 next move, but White comes first with *22.♗xb6!* and two pieces are hanging.)

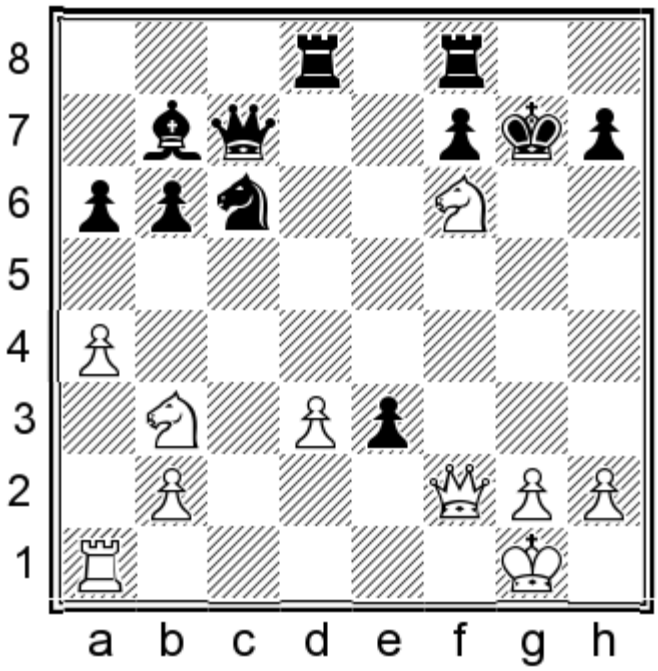
20.cxd3 d4! White's main threats are on the kingside, but Black must also deal with the ♗xb6 threat.

(*20...♘e5 21.♗xb6*)

21.♘e4!

(*21.♘xd4 ♘e5* is probably good for Black.)

21...dxe3 22.♘xf6+ ♔g7



(*22...♔h8?* loses to *23.♕f5 ♔g7 24.♕g5+ ♔h8 25.♕h6+–*)

23.♘h5+! leads to perpetual check.

(*23.♕f5?* is bad now in view of *23...♕e5!* and White has only one check.)

23...♔g8

(*23...♔g6* also leads to a draw after *24.♕f6+! ♔xh5 25.♕f5+ ♔h6 26.♕f6*)

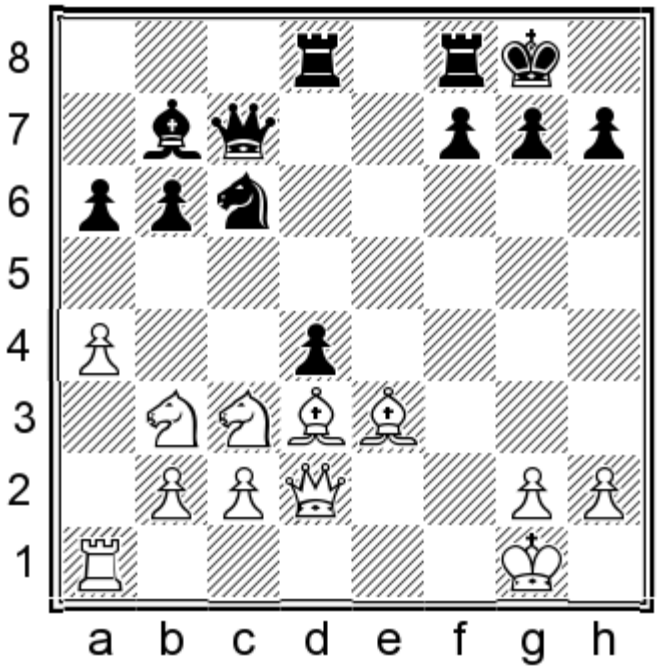
24.♘f6+ and draw.

(*24.♕f6? ♕e5*)

19.♖xc6!

This desperado rook eliminates all the minor pieces. 19.♖ff1? leads to a very bad position after 19...dxe3 20.♕xe3 ♘xd3 21.cxd3 ♖fe8∓ The material is balanced, but the black pieces are much better, the d3-pawn is isolated and weak, and the bishop is going to rule on the long diagonal.

19...♘xc6



White appears to end up an exchange down, but he had another tactical idea in mind — one which actually gives him a material advantage...

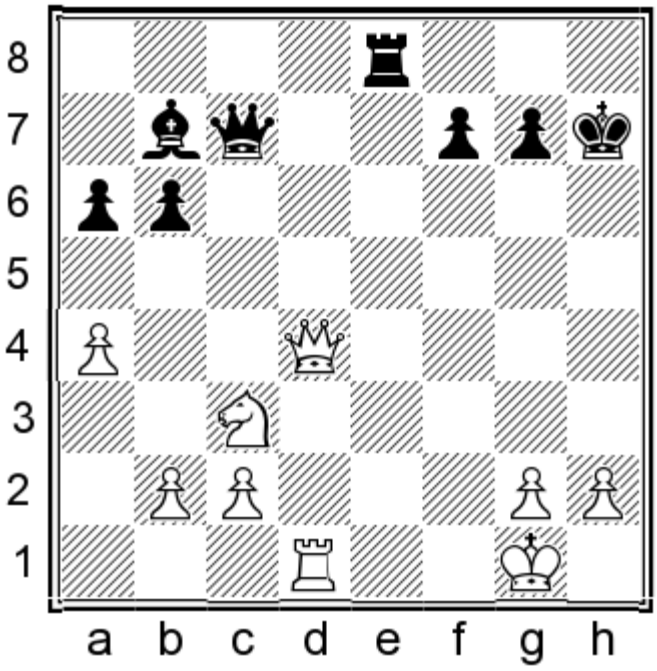
20.♘xd4! ♘xd4 21.♗xd4 ♖xd4 22.♗xh7+! ♔xh7 23.♕xd4

This is the position which was fore-seen long ago by both players. White is a pawn up, but the bishop on b7 is a monster, clearly dominating the knight on c3.

23...♖e8

23...♖d8 was also possible, to occupy the opened file with tempo. Gelfand was probably afraid of losing the e-file, but it is not dangerous at all 24.♕h4+ ♔g8 25.♖e1 ♕c5+ 26.♕f2 ♕b4= with full compensation for the pawn.

24.♖d1



24...♖e6!

It is very important to treat the position actively, otherwise White might consolidate, trade queens and end up with a healthy extra pawn. It is important for Black to keep all 3 pieces on board to create his threats; he should only trade something if he gets some concrete benefits.

25.♖d3 ♖g6 26.♖g3

White eases the pressure on the g2 square. The alternative was 26.♖h3+ ♔g8 27.♘d5 ♗xd5! (*27...♕d6 28.c4!* would be fine for White!) 28.♕xd5 ♖d6! ♕a8 is simply met by ♖d8. Black gets enough compensation on the opponent's back-rank and the c2 pawn. The key line goes 29.♕e4 ♕c5+ 30.♔f1 ♖f6+ 31.♖f3 ♕g5!= and Black cannot deal with the ♕c1 threat, and ♖xf6 drops the b2 pawn after ♕xf6. White does not have a good option to preserve his extra pawn.

26...♖xg3 27.♕h4+ ♔g8 28.hxg3

The problem with 28.♕xg3 was 28...♕c5+! King moves are met by ♕f5! and 29.♕f2 ♕b4! leads to a draw again. 30.♘d1 ♕xa4 31.♕xb6 ♕xc2=

28...♕c6 29.♕d8+ ♔h7 30.♕h4+ ♔g8 31.♕d8+ ♔h7 32.♕d3+ ♔g8 33.♕d8+

Draw agreed! It was possible to play on with 33.♕e2 but there was no realistic hopes for an advantage. Black is too active, the bishop is much better than the knight and White cannot focus on making progress on the kingside, because his king and queen are tied to defense of the kingside pawns. 33...♕c5+ 34.♔h2 g6= with an equal position.

1/2

GAME 46
S. Karjakin (2753)
B. Jobava (2699)
KM FIDE GP 2015 Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (7.3)
21.05.2015, [C10]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

And as usual in Jobava's games the craziness is guaranteed! This time the Georgian Nr.1 chooses the French Defense, but a very rare line. The game quickly gets out of control as Jobava sacrifices an exchange. The resulting position is very sharp, but it should be better for White. Not terribly at ease in the complications, Karjakin goes for an endgame with more-or-less equal material and this wonderful fighting game ends in a draw. A fun game awaits!

1.e4

Usually Jobava plays the Caro-Kann.

1...e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘c6

A rare continuation. Of course 3...♗b4, 3...♘f6 or 3...dxe4 are the 3 main moves.

4.e5

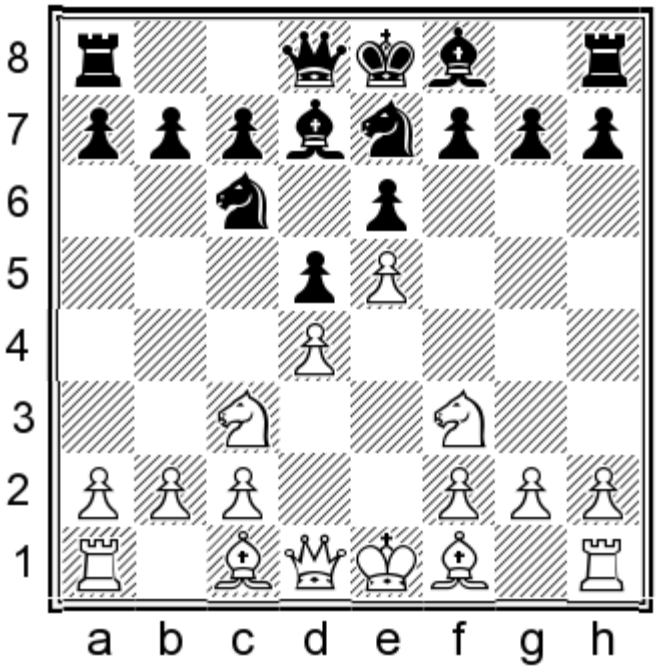
Karjakin closes the center in order to make the knight on c6 look a bit stupid. Black's idea should of course be to play ...c5 somewhere and now it is just impossible.

4...♘ge7

This move is not so easy to understand. Black does not really want to play ...♘f5 and now the typical ...f6 push is no longer so efficient.

5.♘f3 ♗d7

Black keeps on waiting.



6.♘e2

A natural move, but a bit slow. White had the interesting idea 6.h4!? preparing to react with g4 after Black's ♘f5.

6...♘f5

Black seizes the moment and wants to exchange his own knight, which is a very natural decision. In a passive position it is usually a good idea to exchange some pieces.

7.♘g3 ♘h4

Of course not 7...♘xg3 because after 8.hxg3 the white rook would enter the game.

8.c3

This move has to be played anyway since the d4 pawn needs protection.

8...g6!?

A very smart move! Black doesn't let White play ♘h5, from where it would fix the black pawn structure.

9.♗f4

Clearly missing Black's next move... 9.♗d2 looks better.

9...f6!

A very inventive and strong move, which only works because the white bishop is on f4.

10.♘xh4

Of course after 10.exf6 ♕xf6 Black is just better. White had the funny try 10.♘h5 but now after 10...fxe5 (*10...gxh5*

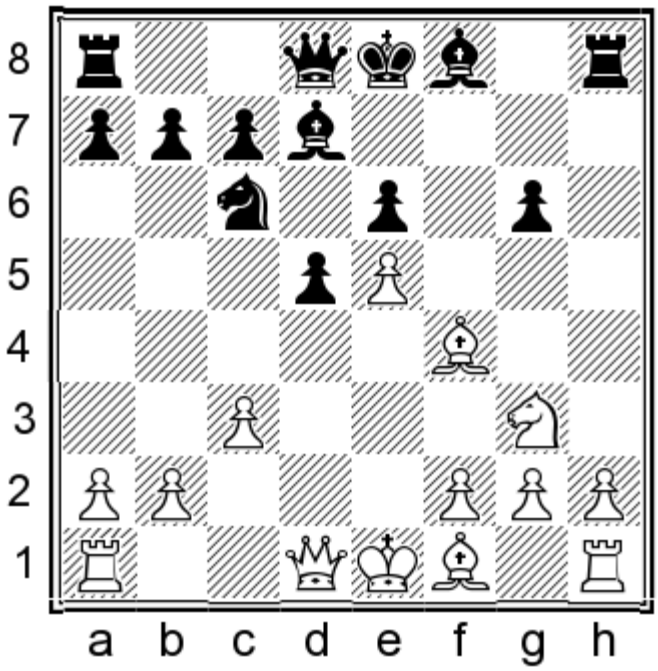
11.♘xh4 and White is winning because ♕xh5 is coming.) 11.♘xe5 ♗d6 the position is very unclear.

10...fxe5 11.♘xg6

What a sharp position!

11...hxg6 12.dxe5

White is a pawn up, but suddenly all the black pieces are in the game.



12...♕h4

Another good move — Black is preparing to castle queenside.

13.♘e2

Another strange decision by Karjakin. Why not first play 13.♕d2, preventing 0-0-0 and threatening to play ♗g5.

13...0-0-0

A logical move, but maybe Black had an even better continuation. He could have faced White with direct problems after 13...♗g7 14.♗g3 It seems like it is difficult to find another way to defend the e5 pawn. 14...♕e7 15.f4 and now Black continues with active play: 15...g5! and White's position is very close to falling apart.

14.♕d2 ♖h5

Jobava continues playing "crazy chess" when it is not really needed. 14...♗e7 looks much more solid, with the idea of playing ...♖f8 next, or maybe now ...♖h5.

15.♘g3

White needs to go for it.

15...♖xe5+

This move is already a must after ...♖h5 was played.

16.♗xe5 ♘xe5

So, what can we say about this position? White is a full exchange up, but the white king is still in the center and the black bishop on f8 will soon come to h6. It is a very difficult position to evaluate, but usually having some extra material is a good thing...

17.♕e3!

A very strong move! White not only attacks the e5 knight, but also the a7 pawn, and therefore the black knight has to leave its perfect position on e5.

17...♘c6 18.♗b5

Of course! The exchange of any piece is good for White.

18...♗h6 19.♕e2

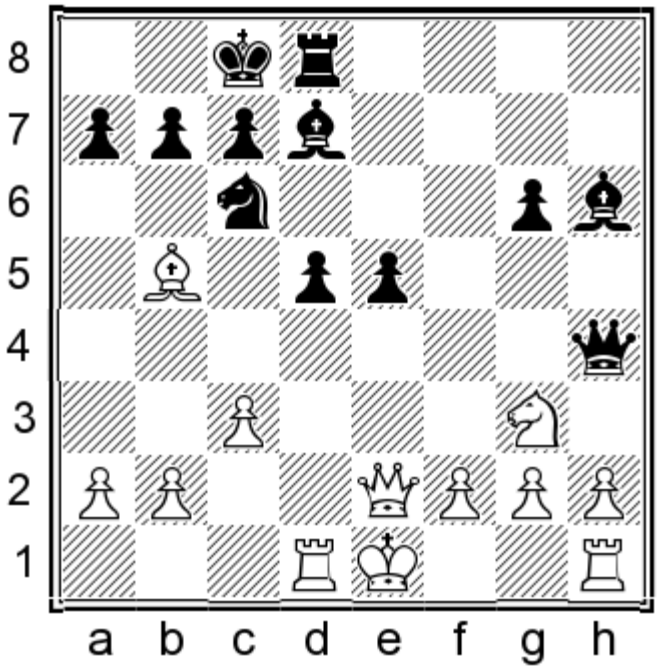
So, what to do next for Black?! Jobava shows us!

19...e5!

A very strong move! There is no time to waste, Black needs to push all he can in the direction of the white king.

20.♖d1

Once again Karjakin plays the most logical move and it seems like it is very difficult for Black to find a good way of defending the d5 pawn, but again Jobava shows us how creative chess can be...



20...a6!

A wonderful move! Black offers another pawn just to keep his center alive!

21.♗xa6

After 21.♗xc6 ♗xc6 the position would remain very unclear, since the black bishop-pair compensates for being an exchange down.

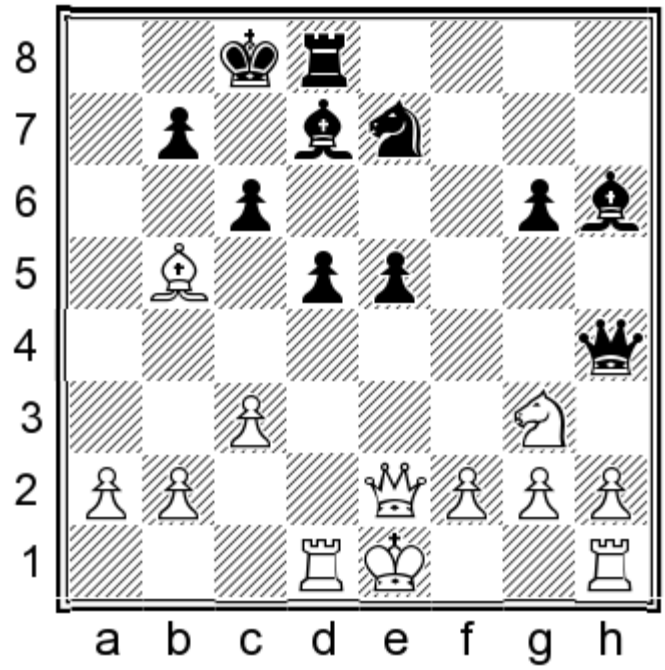
21...♘e7

Wonderful play by black. Now the bishop on a6 is already hanging and the d5 pawn is protected. Of course Black is just losing after 21...bxa6? 22.♕xa6+ ♔b8 23.♖xd5 and White is winning because of the ♖b5 threat.

22.♗b5

Karjakin is choosing the safest moves. Of course the critical line is 22.♗d3 e4 23.♗c2 ♗g4!? Black opens the white king's position. 24.f3 ♗f4! Another very strong move! The position is very complicated!

22...c6



23.♕xe5?!

Karjakin prefers to enter a slightly worse endgame rather than remain in the complications.

23...♗f4

Black could have played 23...cxb5 24.♖d4 ♕g5 25.♕xg5 ♗xg5 and I believe that only Black can be a bit better here.

24.♖d4 ♗xe5 25.♖xh4 cxb5

So we are in an endgame. Black has 2 pieces for a rook and 2 pawns, so the material is about even, but Black still has the bishop pair. So, in case the position remains open, the bishops might dominate the game.

26.0-0

Well, it’s a bit late for castling... :)

26...♔c7

Black brings his king to the center.

27.♖e1 ♔d6

It is not at all easy for White to find the right move here.

28.♖h7

Maybe a good practical choice! At least the rook on h7 is nicely placed.

28...♘c6

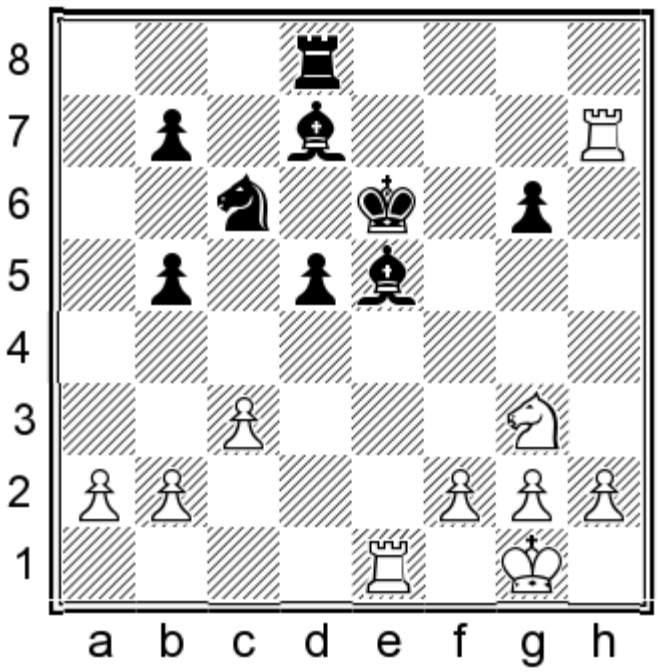
Black could also have continued with 28...♖e8

29.♖d1

preparing ♘e4.

29...♔e6 30.♖e1

White tries to repeat moves and of course this is very logical, especially since Karjakin has not been overly ambitious during the game so far.



30...♔d6

and Jobava is also happy with a draw- but why?! Why not play 30...♔f6? I really cannot imagine Black having any

problems here. White needs to be very careful not to let Black play ...b4, or possibly ...♗b8 followed by ...♘e5 and ...♘c4. I think that Black's position here might be slightly better.

31.♖d1 ♔e6 32.♖e1

A slightly disappointing draw after such a great fighting game, and of course a lot of credit goes to Jobava for his amazingly creative play!

1/2

GAME 47
R. Rapport (2671)
M. Adams (2740)
48th Biel GM 2015 Biel SUI (2.1)
21.07.2015, [C36]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Richard Rapport continues playing in his highly entertaining style- even against the world's best players. Adams takes up the challenge and they play a very interesting game...

1.e4 e5 2.f4

The King's Gambit! We can say that we had to wait for 2 moves for the first sacrifice, but of course this opening must be taken very seriously, as World Champions have employed it successfully in the past.

2...exf4 3.♘f3 d5

Black has many options, but this is given as an easy equalizer by theory.

4.exd5 ♘f6 5.♗e2

This already had to come as a surprise for Black and must have been home preparation by White! The two main moves are ♗b5 and ♗c4.

5...♘xd5 6.c4

White wants to build a huge center with c4-d4 and later win back the material with ♗xf4. If he manages to do all this he will reach a stable advantage.

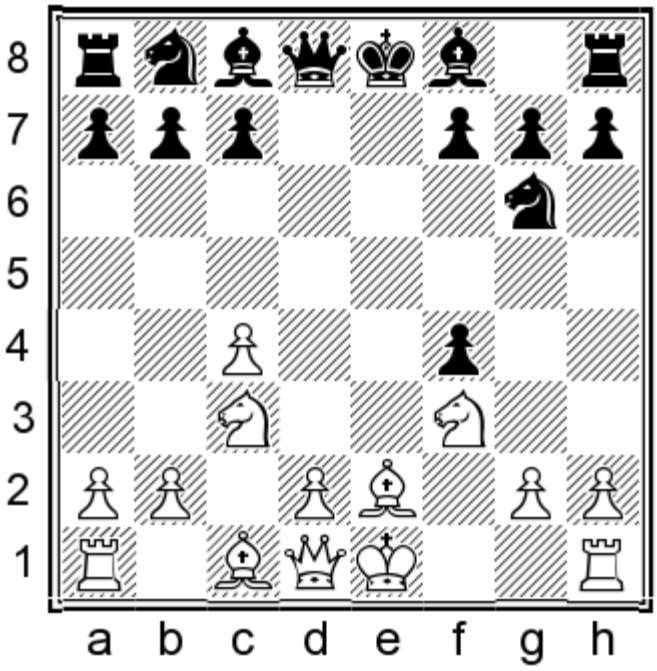
6...♘e7

Black had many other options at his disposal, but Adams wants to retain his extra pawn by taking his knight to g6.

7.♘c3

This is the official novelty. 7.d4 was played in all the previous games. It could still be a transposition if White plays d4 next, but Rapport had something else in mind (or in his preparation).

7...♘g6



8.h4!?

Wow! I am not so sure about the objective strength of this move. Of course it is nice to send the knight back with h5, however Black also has his answers — and later this move could prove rather weakening, since it might be difficult to hide the white king.

8...♗e7

The most natural reply. Developing and giving the knight a good square to go to after h5. The alternative was the simple 8...h5!? preventing h5 and consolidating the nice g4 square for the bishop.

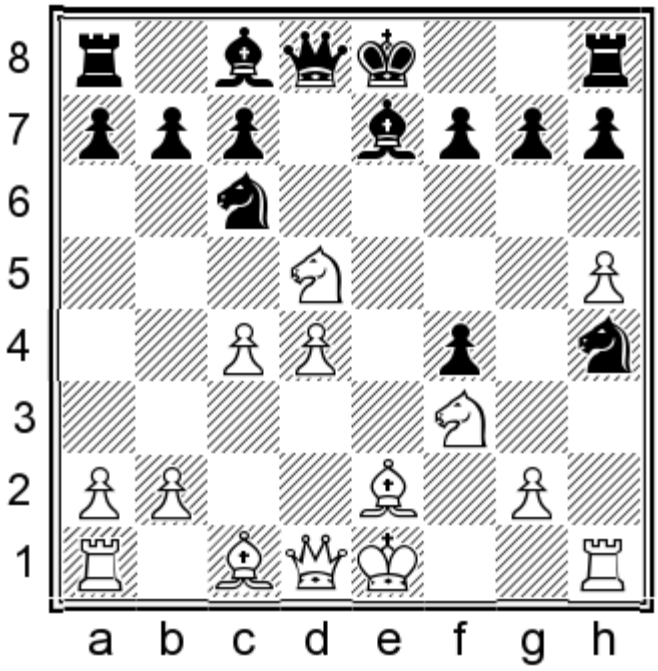
9.h5 ♘h4 10.♘d5!

At least White is very consequent! He does not count the pawns, but rather aims for active piece-play and quick development.

10...♘c6!

Adams also knows that developing his minor pieces is more important than grabbing some pawns... 10...♘xg2+ is met by 11.♔f2 ♘h4 12.d4 and the g2 pawn does not count for much now.

11.d4



11...♘xg2+!

The huge difference to the previous line is that Black can favorably exchange some pieces on e3!

12.♔f1!

Rapport senses the dynamism very well! 12.♔f2 is more logical, but less strong because after 12...♘e3! 13.♘xe3 fxe3+ 14.♗xe3 Black has a free move to play 14...♗f6! and now the d5 move can be met by ♘e5! Black is a pawn up and he has nothing direct to fear.

12...♘e3+ 13.♘xe3 fxe3 14.d5!

It is clear that without the e5-square Black must do something artificial, but of course he will still be a pawn up even after White takes on e3!

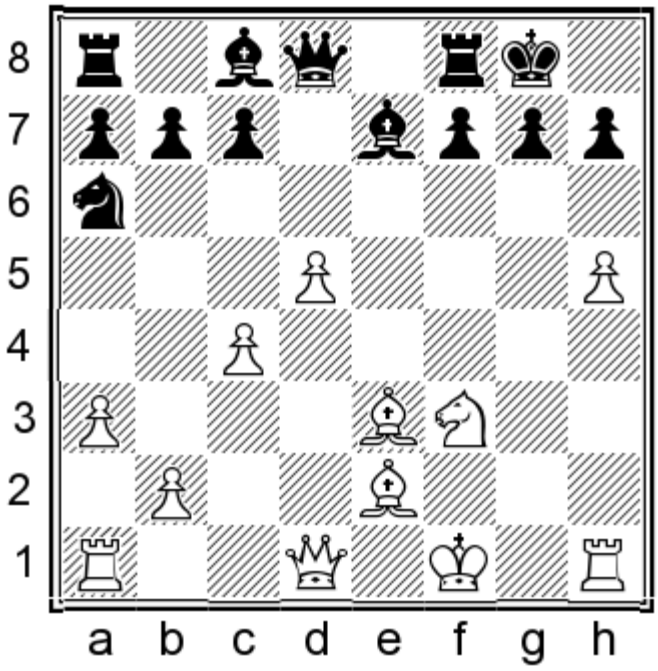
14...♘b4 15.a3 ♘a6

The knight is temporarily on the edge of the board, but it might quickly come back via c5!

16.♗xe3

White has achieved a certain amount of compensation. He has some lead in development, his pieces are standing well and he is ready to explode the kingside with h6. However a pawn is a pawn and Black has no structural weaknesses.

16...0-0



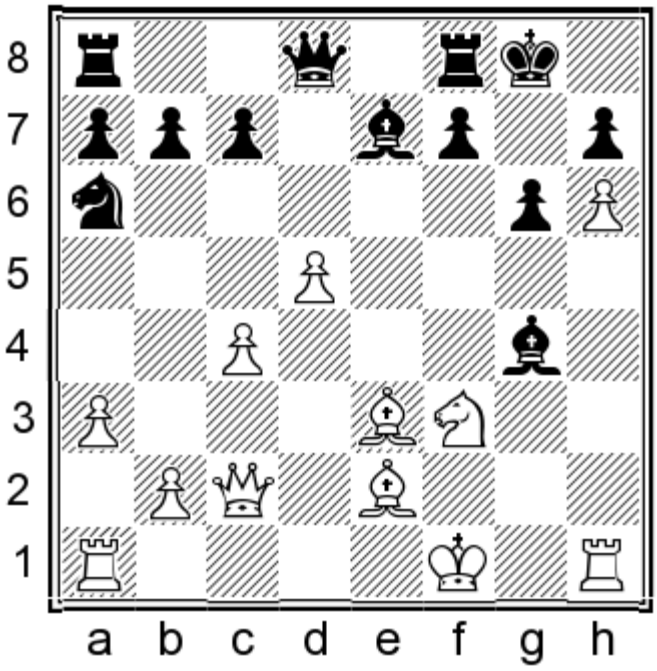
17.♕c2!

White keeps an eye on the h7 square. If it was his move he would play ♗d3 and suddenly it is not easy to deal with the h7 pawn. g6 opens the h-file and provokes dangerous sacrifices on g6. h6 again fixes the pawn structure and White might have very dangerous attacking ideas connected with ♖g1–♗xh6 or ♗d4. The third reply would be f5, but this is very bad positionally as it locks in his own pieces, especially the bishop on c8, and gives up the e6 square. Therefore Adams decides to prevent this ♗d3 idea with a developing move.

17...♗g4

A very natural move, but it also has the drawback that Rapport immediately points out with his next moves...

18.h6! g6



19.♕c3! ♗f6

19...f6 is very ugly, but Black really should have played this. ...♕d7 and ...♖ae8 are coming next.

20.♗d4!

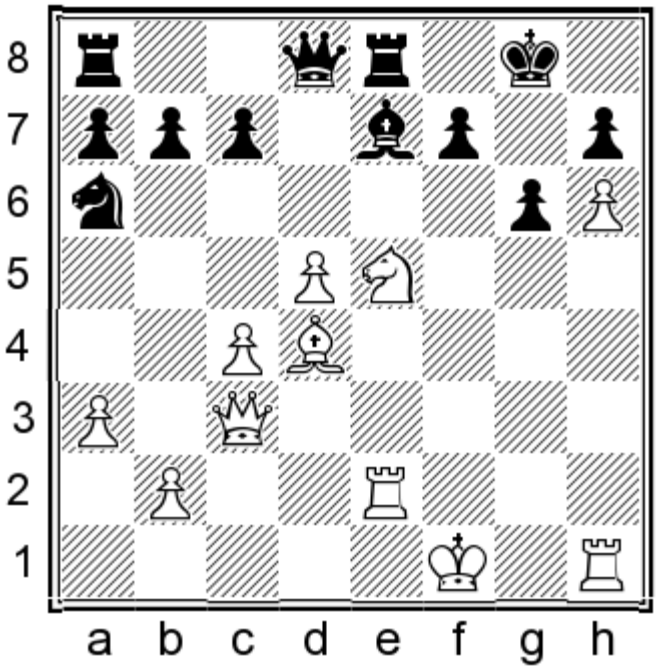
This is the point, and suddenly White creates threats on the g7 square. The only natural move — taking on d4 — does not work because after ♕xd4 the g4 bishop falls.

20...♗e7!

Cold-blooded and strong, but of course it allows a repetition unless Black wants to play on with 19...f6.

21.c5

Rapport likes playing with the initiative, refuses the repetition and takes further ground in the center. In the meantime he completely excludes the a6 knight from the game. The drawback is that the d5 pawn loses its stability. However, it was stronger to bring the rook into the game with 21.♖e1! ♖e8 (*21...♕d7 22.♔g2* threatens with ♘e5! It is not easy to suggest a good move for Black.) 22.♘e5! ♗xe2+ 23.♖xe2



with very strong compensation for the pawn. The problem is that Black could neutralize the g7 square with ♗f8, but it leaves the f6 square unprotected after ♘g4!

21...♖e8!

Calm defense again! Black wants to put his bishop on f8so as not to worry about the g7 mate anymore, and he also activates his rook. 21...♕xd5 was bad in view of 22.♗f2! with the threat of ♕g7 mate and after 22...f6 23.♗c4! wins the queen.

22.c6 ♗f8!?

Black opens the e-file for the rook. He is ready to take on d5 after which the sacrifices on e2 might already work. After the white king is stripped naked, crushing sacrifices around it should not be such a big surprise. The machine suggests - and likes Black after — 22...b5!? with the idea of 23.♗xb5 ♕xd5 counter-attacking the f3 knight.

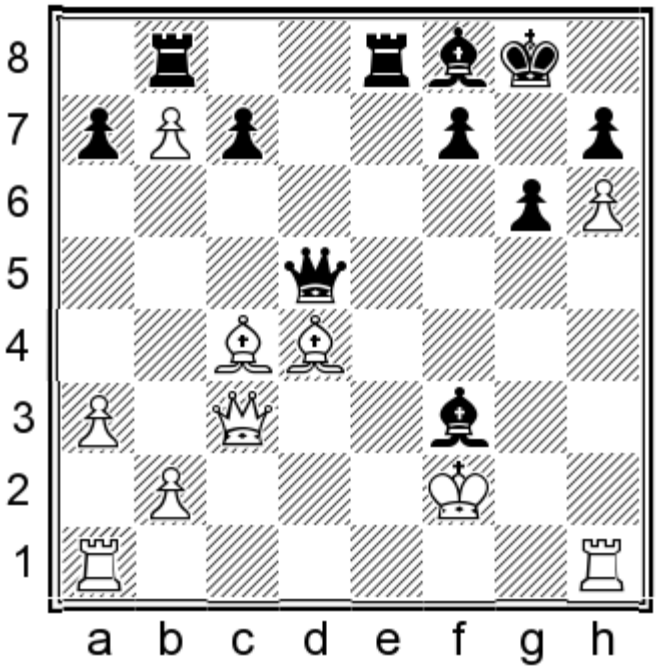
23.cxb7 ♖b8 24.♗xa6

Taking the knight “for free”, but this is objectively a mistake. White ought to have played 24.♗g7! after which the repetition is forced. 24...♗c5 (*24...♗d6? 25.♗xa6* already wins a piece for nothing.) 25.♗d4 (*25.♗xa6? ♕xd5* is still too strong.) 25...♗f8=

24...♕xd5 25.♔f2

25.♗e2 is strongly met by 25...♖xe2! 26.♔xe2 ♗xf3+ 27.♕xf3 ♕xd4 when Black is an exchange down, but he is going to have 2 pawns for it after taking one of the b-pawns. 28.♖ab1 ♕b6!∓ with ♖xb7 next. Black take sover the initiative since his king is already safe and the f8 bishop protects everything, while the white one in the center of the board will come under attack from the heavy pieces.

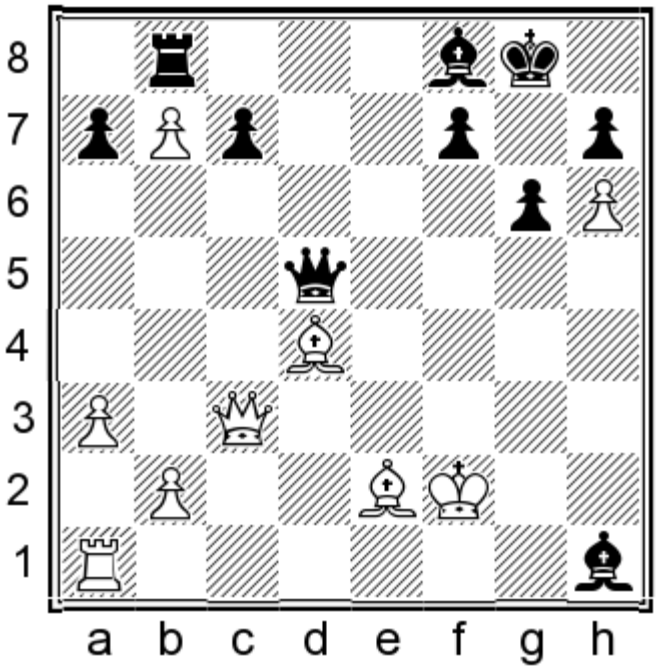
25...♗xf3 26.♗c4



26...♖e2+?!

Very pretty, but wrong! This move leads to a forced repetition. Black could maintain his advantage after 26...♕e4! 27.♖ae1 ♕f4. The only move to avoid big problems is 28.♗xf7+! ♕xf7 29.♕xf3 but Black ends up with an extra pawn after 29...♖xe1 30.♖xe1 c5 31.♗e3 ♖xb7∓ The win is still doubtful because White is active and he might transpose to a drawish rook endgame, but of course the extra pawn will guarantee a long period of suffering for White.

27.♗xe2 ♗xh1



28.♖xh1!

Deflecting the queen from the d4 bishop. Perhaps Adams missed or underestimated these exchange sacrifices, which seem completely unsound at first sight, but together with the following move they are very strong!

28...♕xh1 29.♕xc7!

White creates the threat of ♕e5 and the rook is also under attack! Suddenly it is Black who needs to find the right moves to force a draw!

29...♕h4+!

29...♖xb7 is met by 30.♕e5! f6 31.♗c4+ ♖f7 32.♕e6→ and it is clear that something has gone wrong for Black. 29...♖e8 is bad in view of 30.b8=♕ and the two queens protect everything. Black does not even have a perpetual check. 30...♕h4+ 31.♔f1 ♕h1+ 32.♗g1+–

30.♔f1!

White also cannot play for more with 30.♔g2 (30.♔e3 drops the h6 pawn with check) 30...♕e4+! 31.♗f3 ♖xb7! and White does not have ♕e5!

30...♕h1+ 31.♔f2 ♕h4+ 32.♔f1 ♕h1+ 33.♔f2

A great fighting game that was not without mistakes, but of course in such a sharp position it is impossible to play perfectly.

1/2

GAME 48
I. Bukavshin (2655)
I. Lysyj (2673)
68th ch-RUS 2015 Chita RUS (1)
09.08.2015, [E53]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We are going to look at a fantastic game now, with a lot sacrifices, great positional play and very precise defence by Black. What is also worth mentioning is that the game is just perfect. Both players handled it extremely well, having full control over the situation and making the right decisions in very complicated positions!

1.d4 e6

The move-order in the game is not important, as the game arrives back into the main line of Nimzovich in any event. Sometimes Black starts with 1...e6 on 1.d4, but only in case he feels well-prepared in the French, which could appear after 2.e4. If this were the case here, Lysyj has even written a book on the French Defence!

2.c4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3

One of the oldest and still most popular lines.

4...0-0 5.♗d3 d5 6.♘f3 c5 7.0-0

This is the main position and now Black has a wide range of continuations.

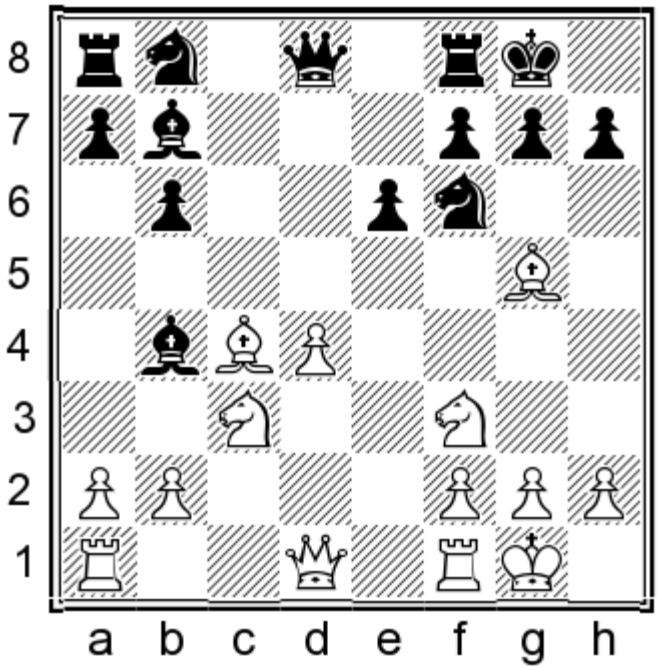
7...cxd4

This has clearly been the most popular line lately. For a long time the most played was 7...♘c6 8.a3 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♕c7 which is still not out of fashion and we can find games of, for example, Topalov in it.

8.exd4 dxc4 9.♗xc4 b6

Black's idea is simple, to quickly get the bishop to b7 and later on put maximum pressure on the d4 pawn.

10.♗g5 ♗b7



11.♘e5

One of the most aggressive continuations. The game is getting very sharp now.

11...h6

It is usually a good idea for Black to include the h6-♗h4 moves before doing something, to secure the king's position a bit more.

12.♗h4 ♘bd7

Black immediately fights against the knight on e5 — clearly the best thing to do.

13.♘xf7!?

This is the beginning of a very interesting variation. Of course it is not dangerous for Black to face 13.♘xd7 ♕xd7 14.♗xf6 gxf6 since in such structures only White is at risk of getting a worse position.

13...♔xf7

Clearly the most principled move. After 13...♖xf7 14.♗xe6 we have a position which is difficult to evaluate, but White

should not be worse. The 2 pawns for the 2 pieces vs rook should give White an edge, but on the other hand Black's pieces are very well-placed and could compensate the slight material disadvantage.

14.♗xe6+

White continues with the sacrifices, but it is already needed.

14...♔xe6 15.♕b3+ ♔f5

The only move yet again.

16.♕c2+ ♔e6

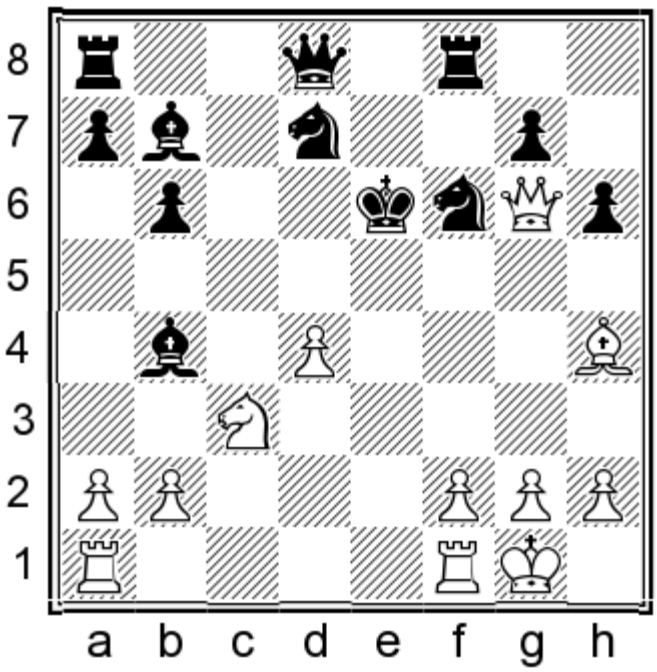
Of course Black can't counter with 16...♗e4 17.♘xe4 ♘xe4 since White wins the queen after 18.♗xd8

17.♕b3+ ♔f5 18.♕c2+ ♔e6

After repeating the moves twice, White continues to play for a win.

19.♕g6!?

A very cool move! White is 2 pieces down but the black king is in grave danger. The direct threat is ♖fe1 and after ...♔d6 White would have ♗g3.



19...♗xc3!

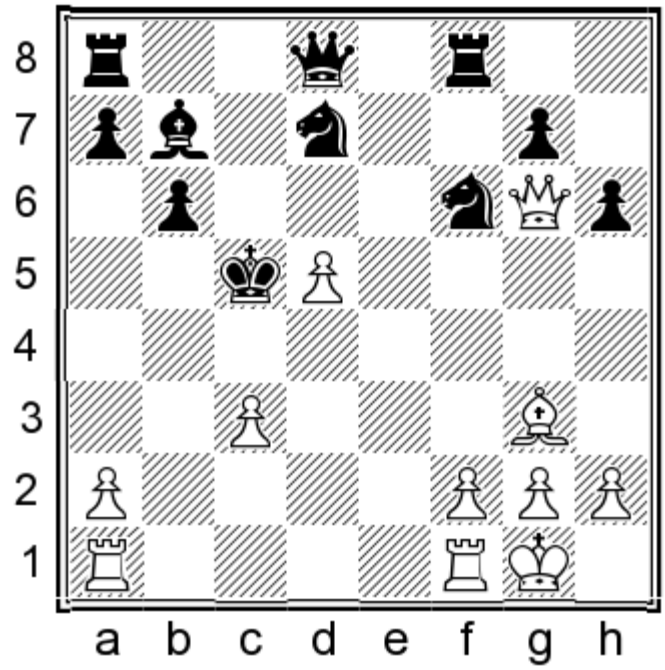
The strongest response. Black not only exchanges a piece- which is great as he is 2 pieces up and has an open king- but also protects for a second time the e1 square. Let's take a look at a sample line: 19...♗d5 20.♖fe1+ ♔d6 and now White catches the black king on d6 and doesn't give him a chance to escape with ...♔c6-♔b7: 21.♖ac1!? with a lot of different mating threats.

20.bxc3

and now Black really has a very wide range of moves, because it seems like White doesn't have any direct threats.

20...♖e8!

Another excellent decision by Lysyj. 20...♗e4? 21.♖fe1 and Black loses a full piece after 21...♔d6 22.♖xe4 with a strong attack. The game could also be very interesting after 20...♔d6 21.♗g3+ ♔c6 and now White has the very strong 22.d5+! ♔c5



(*22...♔xd5 23.♕f5+* leads to mate: *23...♔c6 24.♕e6+ ♔b5 25.a4+ ♔a5 26.♕c4*)

23.c4!! To find such an amazing move is extremely hard over the board. The idea is to force the black king to take the c4 pawn, after which the c-file opens. 23...b5 24.♖ab1 and it seems that White's attack is deadly! What a crazy position!

21.♖fe1+ ♔d5

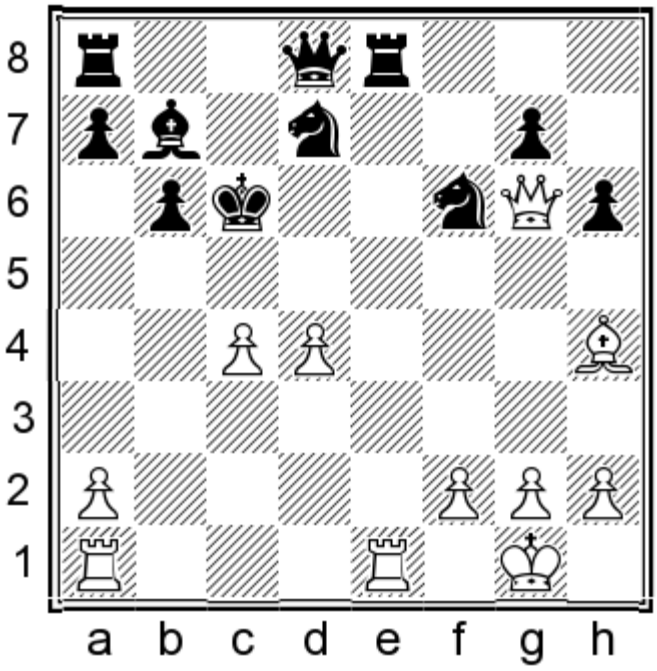
The right move. 21...♔d6 was losing, as after 22.♕g3+ the queen comes back into the game. 22...♔c6 23.d5+ ♔c5 24.c4 and White will mate soon.

22.c4+

White needs to do something fast!

22...♔c6

The best move once again.



White is mating after 22...♔xc4 23.♕c2+ ♔d5 24.♕f5+

23.♕g3!

An excellent move. White continues to threaten d5 and now another idea is to just give a check on f3 at some point. 23.♕xg7 is almost losing for White. 23...♗a6! Freeing the b7 square for the king. 24.d5+ ♔c7 and although Black remains with a big material advantage, things are still not that clear.

23...♖xe1+

Probably the only move again. 23...♗a6 was losing on the spot: 24.♕f3+! ♔c7 25.♗g3+ ♔c8 26.♕xa8+

24.♖xe1

What a shocking position. White just has 3 pieces left on the board and he is 2 pieces down- but still things are very unclear! This is a very rare case in chess.

24...♕g8

The only move. White threatened to mate-in-one by playing ♖e6.

25.♖c1

A very strange move, but maybe the best one! White wants to play d5. 25.d5+ was losing: 25...♘xd5 26.cxd5+ ♕xd5;

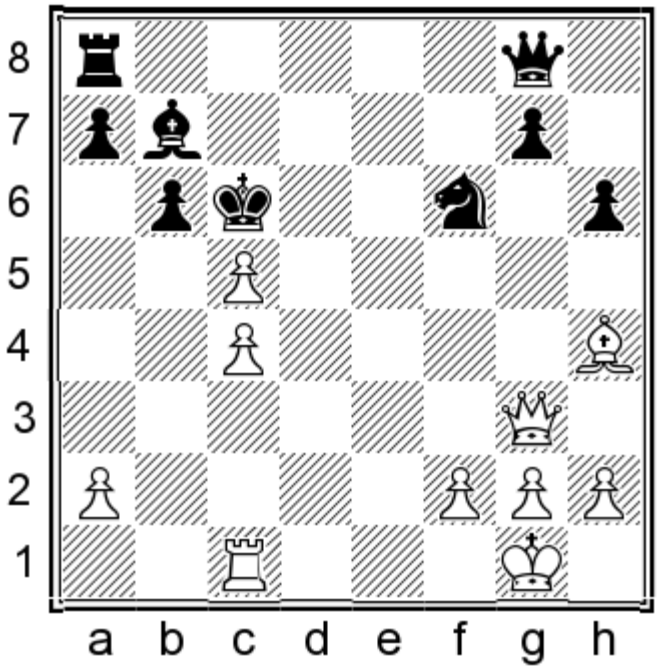
25.♕f3+ didn't work either: 25...♔c7 26.♗g3+ ♔c8 27.♕f4 ♕d8;

But perhaps an interesting choice was 25.♗xf6 ♘xf6 26.♖e7 and it seems that the game would end in a draw after 26...♖c8 27.♕f3+ ♔d6 28.♕a3+ ♔c6 29.♕f3+ What a beautiful perpetual check !

25...♘c5!

Perfect play! 25...♗a6 would still lead to a dangerous position. 26.♕f3+ ♔d6 27.♖e1! Cutting off the king's escape route.

26.dxc5



26...♕e6

Another only move. White is winning after 26...bxc5? 27.♕f3+ This line is very forced. 27...♔c7 28.♗g3+ ♔c8 29.♕f5+ ♘d7 30.♕f4 ♕d8 31.♖e1 with the deadly threat of playing ♖e8. The game is over.

27.♕xg7

Why not take a pawn if possible? Now White already has 3 pawns for the piece and his attack is still alive.

27...♘d7

Black is trying to consolidate.

28.♗g3

Defending against the ...♖g8 idea and at the same time placing the black king under pressure.

28...♖g8

The black pieces are finally out.

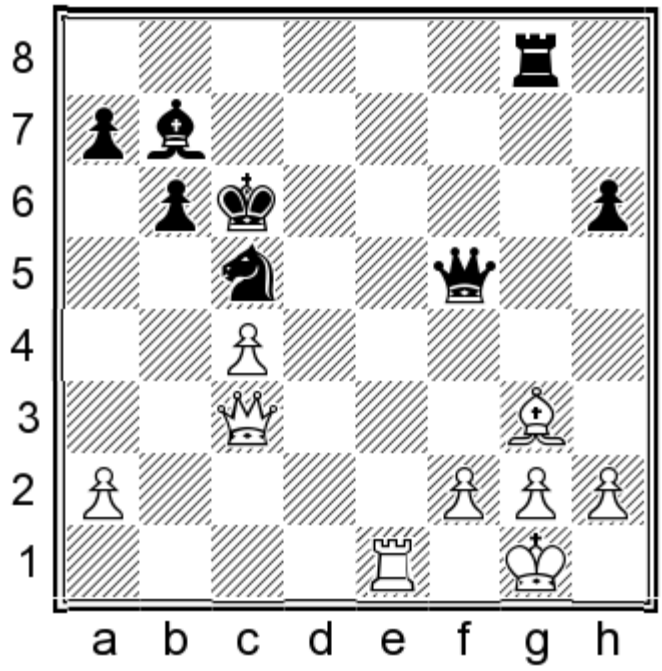
29.♕c3

White wants to play ♖e1 next. 29.♕b2 would lead to a very interesting position. 29...♗a6 30.cxb6 axb6 and it is very hard to tell who is better here, but maybe Bukavshin thought that it could become a bit dangerous with Black somehow going for the g2 pawn with ...h5 or playing ...♗b7 and ...♕c6.

29...♘xc5 30.♖e1

Can Black stabilize the position to get the full point?

30...♕f5



After 30...♕f7 31.♕d4! looks very strong and Black already needs to give up the exchange in order to avoid being worse. 31...♖xg3 32.hxg3 and I think White is clearly better here.

31.♖e7

Threatening mate on c7.

31...♕b1+ 32.♖e1 ♕f5 33.♖e7

A repetition of moves!

33...♕b1+

The last chance for Black was to play 33...♘d7 and again it is really difficult to say who is better here... The black king is very dangerously placed, but it is also hard for White to find a way to continue the attack. It is a very complicated position!

34.♖e1

Why do such great fighting games usually end with a “boring” draw?! :)

1/2

GAME 49
N. Vitiugov (2719)
D. Dubov (2654)
68th ch-RUS 2015 Chita RUS (9)

18.08.2015, [D17]
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

We will witness a great fighting game with many unusual and beautiful tactical motifs.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4

The initial position of the Slav Defense.

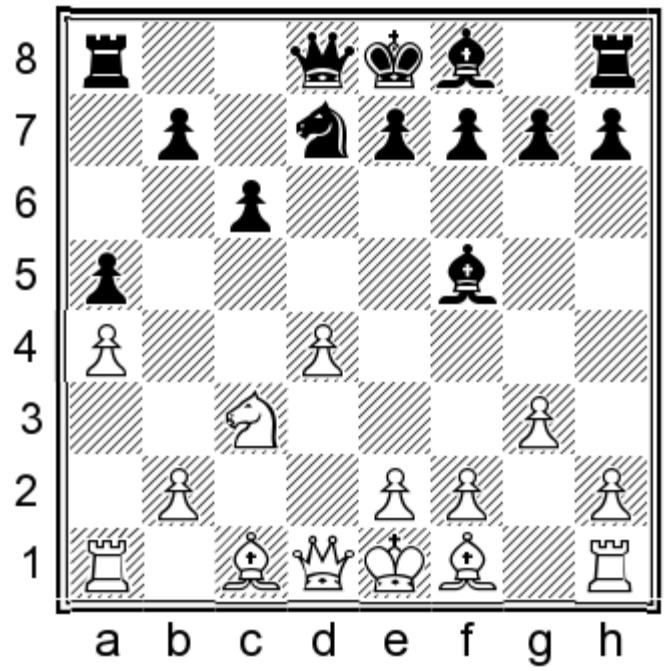
5.a4 ♗f5 6.♘e5 ♘bd7 7.♘xc4 ♘b6 8.♘e5 a5

Black has many other theoretical lines at his disposal. I personally also like to employ this opening. It has both many sharp and many positional lines, depending on how White plays now.

9.g3 ♘fd7

Quite a rare move, but it has been tried recently by some very strong grandmasters. In general the exchange of the active knight on e5 is good for Black and a standard idea in this opening. The main line goes 9...e6 10.♗g2 ♗b4 11.0-0 0-0 12.e3 h6 with a complex fight with all the pieces on the board.

10.♘xd7 ♘xd7



However this is more-or-less new. Black would like to free his position with e5. However it could not have come as a surprise to Vitiugov, because Dubov played exactly the same way two days earlier against Tomashevsky, and he equalized very easily. Most of the games continue with 10...♕xd7 11.e4 ♗h3 12.♗xh3 ♕xh3 13.♕b3 ♖a6 with an unusual game. White cannot castle kingside, but he ties up the black pieces on the b6 square. Black tries to untie them with ...e6-♗b4, but White also has many resources.

11.e4

That game continued with 11.♗g2 e5 12.d5 ♗c5! 13.0-0 0-0 and Black sacrifices a pawn for activity. 14.♘e4 Tomashevsky decided to avoid the complications but it led to quick simplifications... (If White accepts the pawn with *14.dxc6 bxc6 15.♗xc6 ♖c8 16.♗g2 ♘b6* all the black pieces are placed perfectly. It is very important to mention the

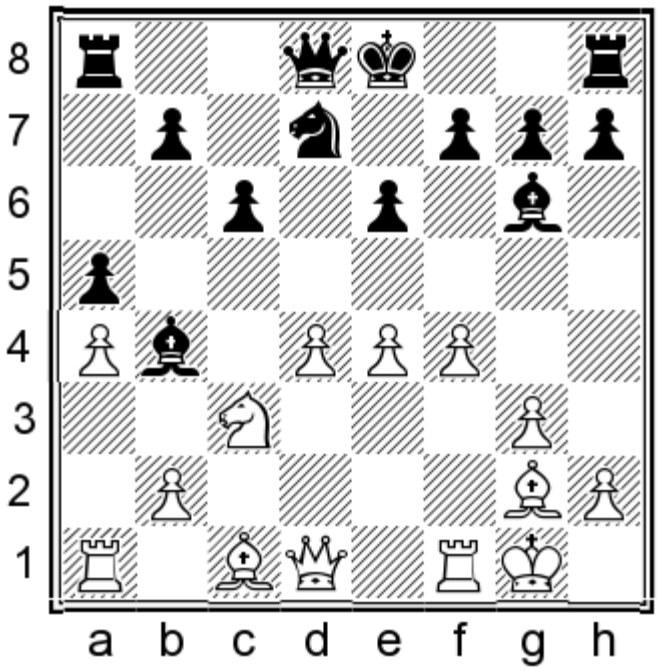
pawn structure on the queenside. If the white pawn was on a2, then I am not sure if the compensation would be satisfactory. However now the structure is fixed, the one pawn on a5 blocks the two white ones and Black has an extremely useful outpost on b4, which could be used by the bishop.) 14...♗xe4 15.♗xe4 ♘f6 16.♗g5 cxd5 17.♗xf6 ♕xf6 18.♕xd5 ♕e7 19.♖ac1 b6 20.♖fd1 ♖ad8 and the players soon agreed a draw in Tomashevsky-Dubov, Chita 2015.

11...♗g6 12.f4

White prevents the e5 break and intends to obtain a powerful center.

12...e6 13.♗g2 ♗b4 14.0-0

White already threatens to trap the bishop with f5.



14...f6!

This is the novelty. Most probably a prepared one, as it is given as the best by the computers. A typical move of the variation. The g6 bishop often gets shut out of the game, but now Black wants to bring it back to f7 — and the other point is to support the e5 break.

15.♗e3 0-0

Black finishes his development and slowly prepares for the ...e5 break. White tries directly to gain some benefits before Black can execute his plans.

16.♘a2 ♗e7 17.♕b3

A double attack on e6 and b7. It looks very strong as it wins a pawn, however Black gets compensation...

17...♗f7

It is clear that the e6 pawn is more important than the one on b7. Also the queen on b7 finds herself plagued by tactical motifs. There is no concrete way to trap her, but still she is in the danger zone.

18.♕xb7 c5

This central blow mainly aims to get the c5 square for the minor pieces. Black also threatens to restore the material balance with ...♖b8-b2 as the c6 pawn is no longer hanging.

19.e5

The alternative was 19.d5 but then Black replies with 19...♖b8 20.♕a6 exd5 21.exd5 ♖xb2 and White cannot trap the bishop with d6, because the a2 knight is hanging. Black could play ...♖e8 next, freeing the f8 square for the bishop.

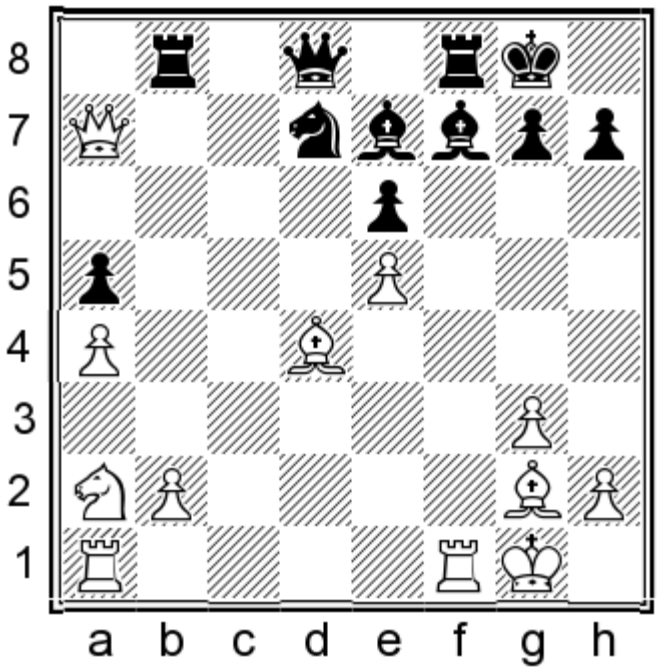
19...♖b8 20.♕a7!

It is important to control the c5 square, otherwise White can quickly find himself in trouble. The bishop on g2 works well now on the long diagonal, and White does not need to worry about trapping the queen. 20.♕a6 is strongly met by 20...cxd4 21.♗xd4 ♘c5! and losing the dark-squared bishop creates huge problems for White. 22.♕c4 ♘b3 23.♖ad1 ♘xd4 24.♖xd4 ♕b6 25.♔h1 ♖fc8 26.♕d3 ♕xb2–+ Black wins the a2 knight in this pretty-much forced line.

20...cxd4 21.♗xd4

The best chance to fight for an advantage. White would like to bring back his queen to consolidate his position, but it does not work concretely because Black wins back the sacrificed pawn with 21.♕xd4 fxe5 22.fxe5 ♗c5 23.♕c3 ♗xe3+ 24.♕xe3 ♖xb2 and Black is fine.

21...fxe5 22.fxe5



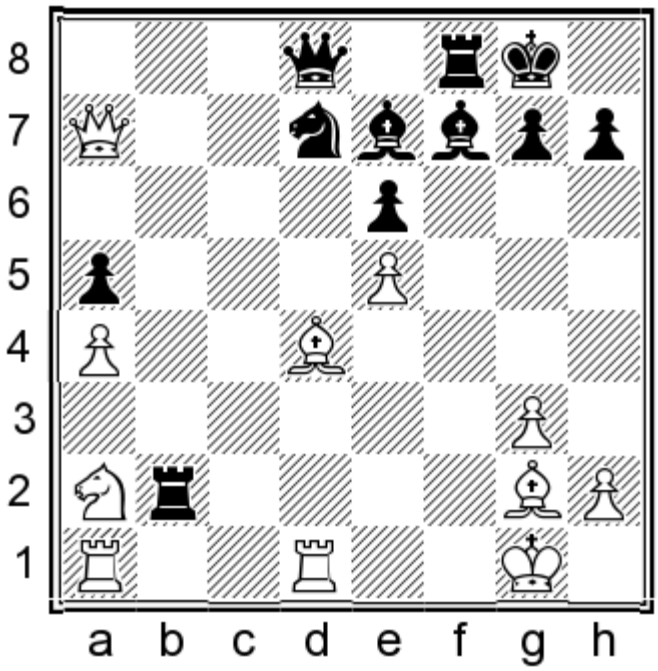
White seems to have full control over the position. He is a pawn up, his bishops control all the important squares on the queenside. He is also threatening ♖ad1, creating decisive threats against the d7-knight. However Black comes up with unexpected tactical resources and creates enough counterplay to save the game!

22...♖xb2!

The first tactical blow! The rook cannot be taken because ...♗c5 wins the queen.

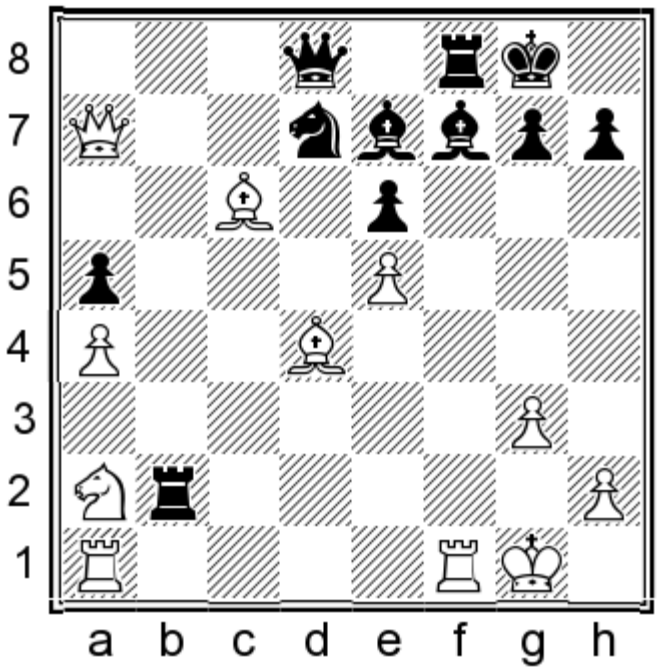
23.♖fd1

Of course it would be better to place the other rook on d1, but it has to protect the a2 knight. White is already threatening to take the rook because after ...♗c5 ♕xc5 the d8 queen is also hanging, leaving White with an extra piece after the simplifications. White also plans to play ♗e3 and the d7-knight is in trouble again because of the pin on the d-file.



23.♗xb2? ♗c5+;

23.♗c6 also looked strong, but Black saves himself with another unexpected tactical blow:



23...♗c5!! 24.♗xc5 ♘xc5 25.♕xc5 ♕d2 26.♖f2 White seems to defend everything, but Black wins back the piece with 26...♕xf2+! 27.♕xf2 ♖xf2 28.♔xf2 ♗e8+! 29.♗f3 ♗h5 and Black is better.

23...♖xg2+!

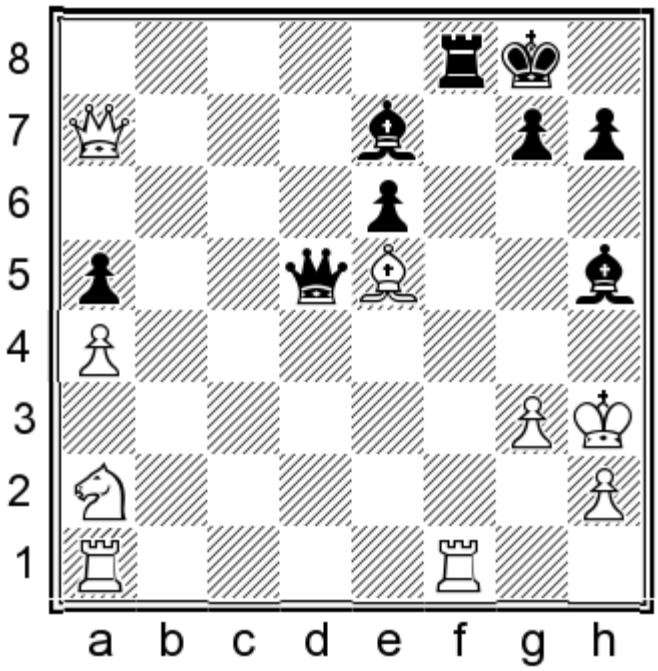
Another great shot! White destroys the main defender of the king, however his pieces seemingly do not stay active enough to guarantee compensation. However, chess is strange and the attack starts to roll!

24.♔xg2 ♗h5! 25.♗e3

It seems to be over! White gives up his rook, but the d7-knight cannot be defended afterwards... 25.♖d3? allows 25...♘xe5! and 25.♖f1 is beautifully refuted by 25...♘xe5! 26.♗xe5

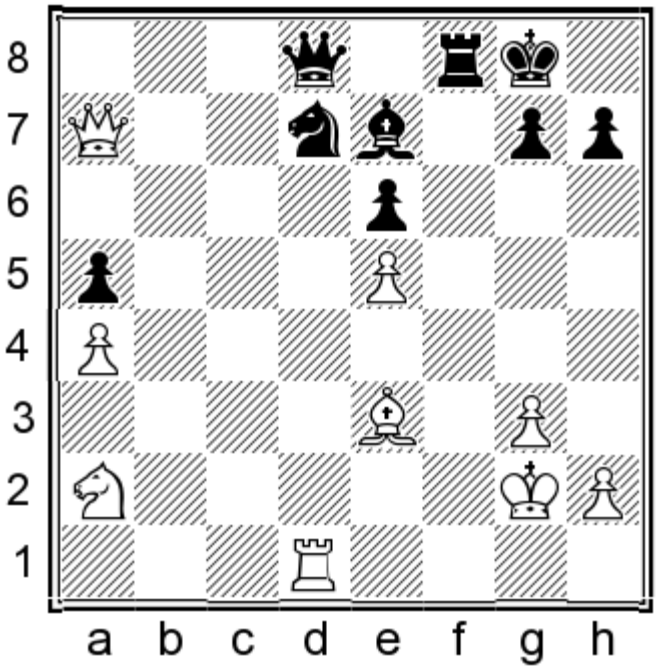
(*26.♖xf8+ ♗xf8 27.♗xe5 ♕d5+ 28.♔h3 ♕f3!* will be the same as the 26.♗xe5 line.)

26...♕d5+ 27.♔h3



♔g1 was losing to ♗c5, but now the king is in a mating net after 27...♕e4! 28.♖xf8+ ♗xf8 29.♗f4 ♗f3! Threatening with ♕f5 after controlling the g2 square 30.♕xa5 ♗g2+ 31.♔g4 ♗e7–+ and ♕f3 or ♕e2 is going to be mate soon as well.

25...♗xd1 26.♖xd1



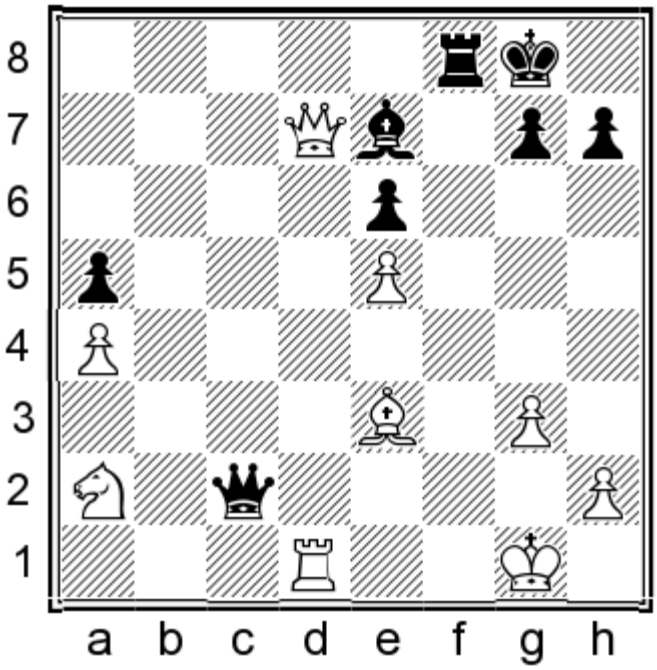
26...♕c8!

Black sacrifices a piece again, but he activates his queen to create counterplay.

27.♕xd7 ♕c2+

White does not have an adequate response here. Black always has something.

28.♔g1



28.♕d2 is met by 28...♕e4+ 29.♔g1 ♖d8! 30.♕xd8+ (*30.♗d4 ♗c5!*) 30...♗xd8 31.♖xd8+ ♔f7 White is temporarily doing well materially, but his pieces are unco-ordinated. The queen dominates the board and gives Black the initiative!

28.♔h3 ♕f5+

28...♗g5!

The final blow, yet another piece sacrifice! White must agree to a draw by allowing perpetual check.

29.♗xg5

29.♗a7 ♕xa2 wins back the piece and protects the e6 pawn at the same time. 29.♕xe6+? leaves the d1-rook unprotected. White is in trouble after 29...♔h8

29...♕f2+ 30.♔h1 ♕f3+ 31.♔g1 ♕f2+ 32.♔h1 ♕f3+ 33.♔g1

A nice save by Black! A good example of how if we stay tactically sharp we can save difficult positions!

1/2

GAME 50
F. Caruana (2808)
W. So (2779)
3rd Sinquefield Cup 2015 Saint Louis USA (9.5)
01.09.2015, [A15]
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

It was clearly not the tournament of Caruana or So, as both players missed a lot of chances in previous games and were ranked at the lower-end of the crosstable. Anyhow, the game we are going to see is a very exciting one. From the opening Caruana managed to get a big attack on So's king and with it a huge advantage, but he missed the best continuation in the tactical calculations. The game then became very unclear and finally ended in a split-point.

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4

To guess Caruana's openings is a difficult task. Fabiano is very well-prepared and plays both 1.e4 and 1.d4.

2...b6 3.g3 c5

In the current position there are a lot of different move orders and many different positions depending on who wants to reach what...

4.♗g2

The system with g3 and ♗g2 is one of the most popular ones.

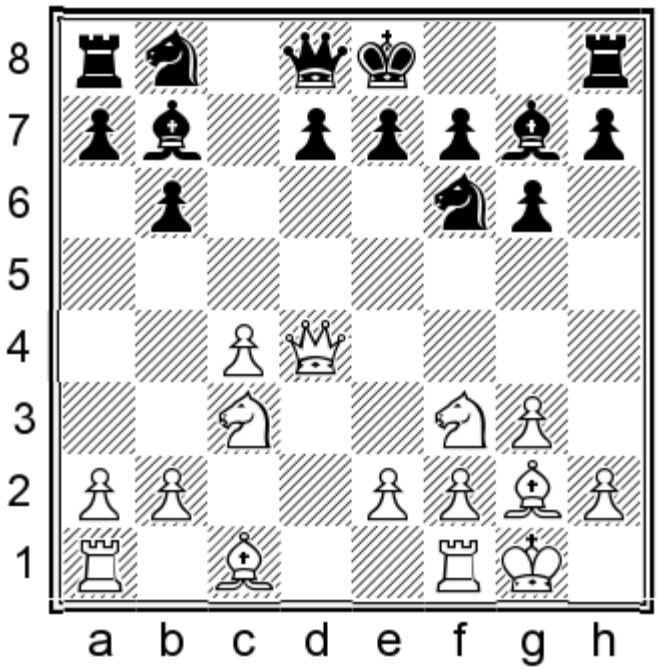
4...♗b7 5.0-0 g6

5...e6 is the other main possibility.

6.d4 cxd4 7.♕xd4

The line with ♕xd4 is a very tricky one. White's idea is simple, to get the queen to h4 at an opportune moment and to play ♗h6, followed by ♘g5, with attack.

7...♗g7 8.♘c3



8...d6

Of course all this has been played many times before.

9.♗e3 ♘bd7 10.♖ac1 ♖c8

Black is trying to delay castling short to avoid ♕h4-♗h6. In the current position after ♕h4 Black always has h6.

11.b3 a6 12.♖fd1

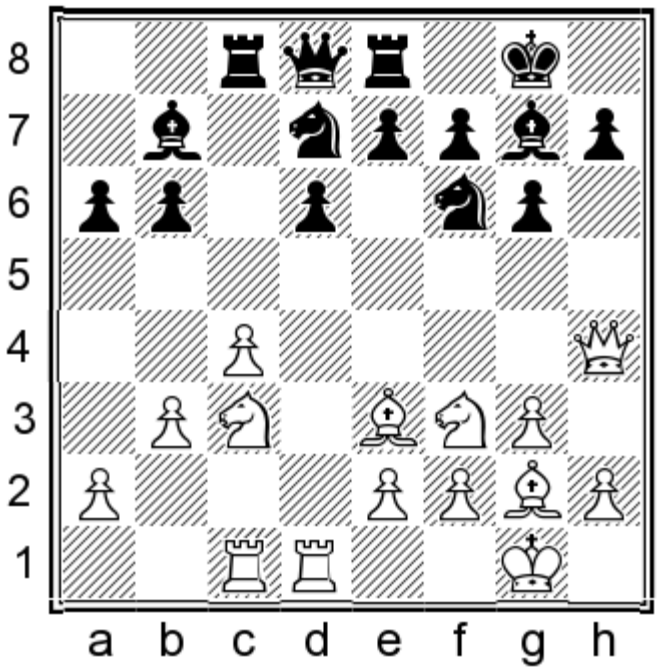
Now that Black has no more useful moves, So castles.

12...0-0 13.♕h4

and of course Caruana heads for the main idea of the whole line.

13...♖e8

Very logical. In the event that White could exchange the dark squared bishops, his position would be a bit better, so Black prepares to play ...♗h8 after ♗h6.



14.♗h3!

An excellent move with multiple ideas. First of all White is not afraid of ♗xf3 exf3 which would just lead to a better position for White. Now he can move the knight from f3 without exchanging the white squared bishops, which is good, and the rook on c8 is also sort of pinned.

14...♖c7 15.g4

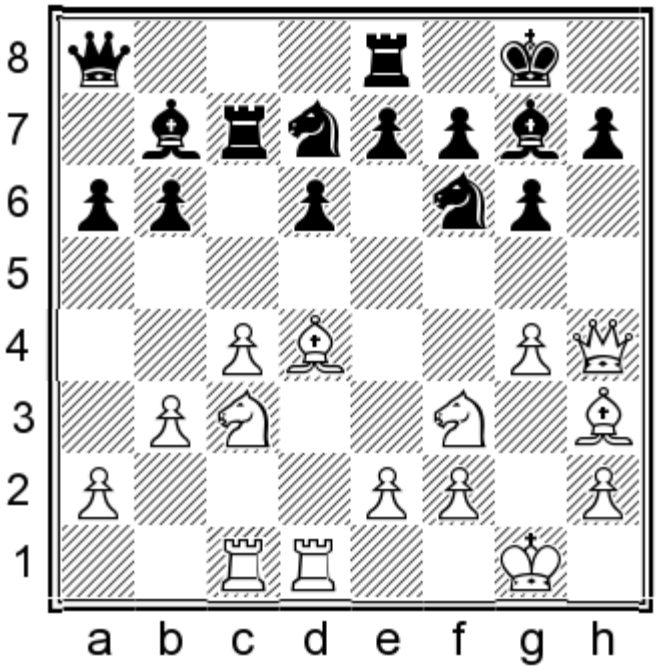
and here comes Caruana! White's idea is simply to play g5 next.

15...♕a8

A very logical reply, even if the queen is out of play on a8, and now Black is prepared to answer g5 with ♘e4.

16.♗d4

White wants to finally play g5 and exchange the bishops, which would weaken the position of the black king a lot.



In case of 16.g5 ♘e4 17.♘a4 b5 things look very unclear.

16...h6?!

Here I have to disagree with So. This move just appears too dangerous to me. 16...b5!? Maybe Black could have tried to complicate things after 17.g5 ♘h5 18.♗xg7 ♘xg7 but maybe even here White can keep some advantage by playing 19.♘d5 ♗xd5 20.cxd5 and it is still not that simple to achieve equality for Black. Black is almost losing after 16...♗xf3? 17.exf3 ♕xf3 18.g5 ♘h5 19.♘d5 with very strong play for the pawn.

17.g5

Of course there is no reason to hesitate about playing g5.

17...hxg5 18.♘xg5

Now Black must always be careful about the h7 square. This is a very unpleasant position to play in a practical game.

18...e6

After this move White gains a clear target, the d6 pawn, but Black was clearly very afraid of the upcoming ♘d5 move. In case of a passive move like 18...♕d8 19.♘d5 ♗xd5 20.cxd5 White's position is clearly much better.

19.♗e3!

Great play by White! The d6 pawn is in serious trouble.

19...♕b8 20.♗f4

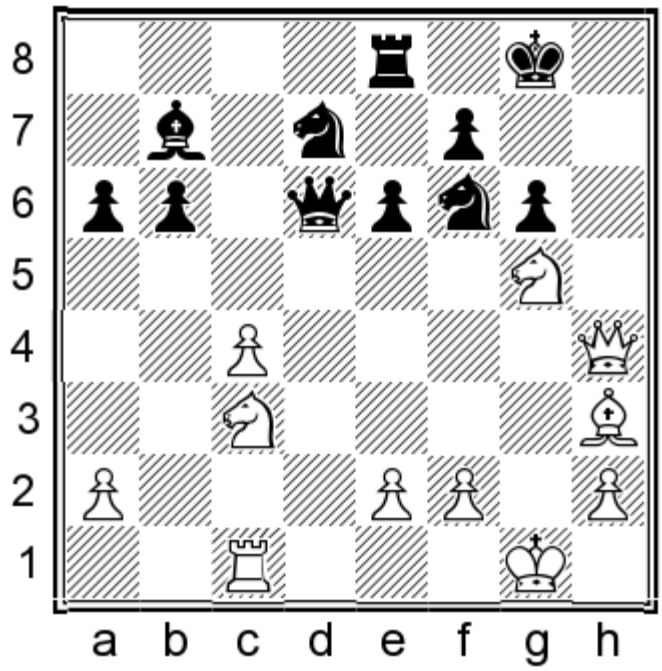
Another good move by White. A big mistake would be 20.♖xd6? ♖xc4 21.♕xc4 ♕xd6 and Black is fine.

20...♗f8?

This is just a blunder... The only way to continue was 20...e5 21.♗e3 ♗f8 with a bad position.

21.♖xd6?

and White hands back the present! Of course Caruana saw 21.♗xd6 ♗xd6 22.♖xd6 ♖xc4 23.bxc4 ♕xd6 but here he clearly missed the winning move



24.♕h8+! A very nice combination! 24...♔xh8 25.♘xf7+ ♔g7 26.♘xd6 with a winning endgame for White.

21...e5

Now the position is really complex.

22.♖xd7 exf4

The threats around the black king are still not gone, but are a little less dangerous.

23.♖cd1

Caruana wants to keep the d-file for himself.

23...♗g7?

Another mistake. Much stronger was 23...♔g7! with the idea of moving the bishop from f8 and playing ...♖h8.

24.♖7d3?!

Caruana missed two much stronger options: White could have gone for the very complicated 24.♘xf7 ♖xd7 25.♗xd7 ♔xf7 26.♗xe8+ ♔xe8 27.♕g5 ♔f7 28.♖d4 with a clearly better position, even if things are not that clear here from a practical point of view. Much simpler was 24.♖7d6 ♗a8 25.♕xf4 Why not just win a full pawn?! White is clearly better here.

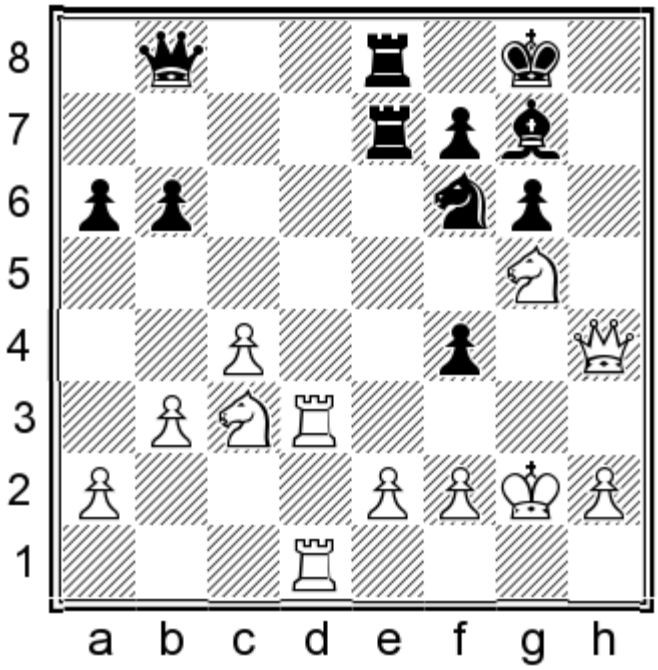
24...♖ce7

and although White is still a pawn up, things are very unclear in this position.

25.♗g2

Very logical. The exchange of bishops will help White to gain control of the white squares and the bishop on h3 has done his job.

25...♗xg2 26.♔xg2



26...♘h5!

So is back in the game.

27.♘d5

Caruana finds nothing better than to give up the e2 pawn, which is actually not a bad decision at all.

27...♖xe2 28.♕g4

The white queen is going to take up residence on f3, which is a nice square for her.

28...♕d6 29.♕f3 ♕c5 30.♖3d2

As we can see, the position is really complicated and hard to play for both players.

30...♖2e5

A good choice. Black wants to control the e-file and the exchange of rooks would make things easier for White.

31.h4 b5

If the knight on d5 could be chased away, Black would already be better!

32.♖c2

The pawn on c4 has to be defended.

32...b4 33.♖cd2

Both players were already in time-trouble.

33...a5 34.♕g4

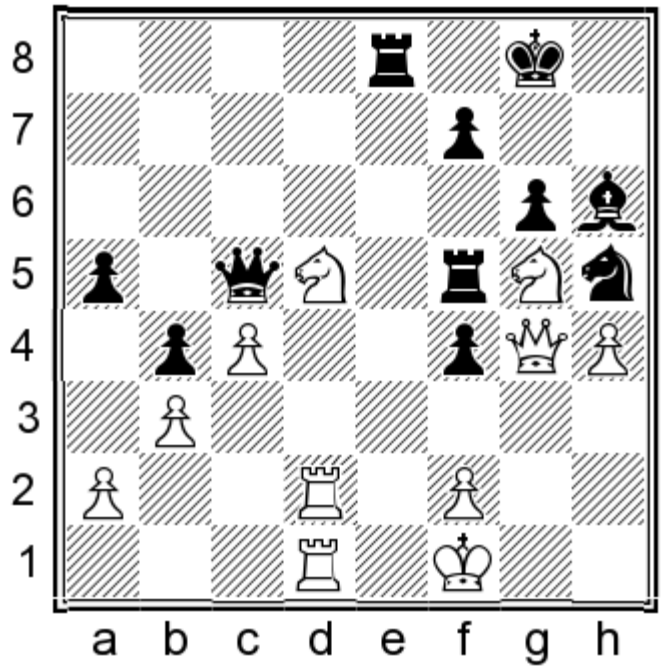
Caruana just keeps on waiting.

34...♗h6 35.♔f1

Both players are trying to make solid moves.

35...♖f5

I think this is not the most logical.



Why not simply play 35...♗xg5 36.hxg5 ♖f5 with the easy threat of playing ♖ee5 next. The g5 pawn could be in danger.

36.♘f3

Now the rook on f5 is isolated.

36...♗g7 37.♕g2

A slightly strange move in my opinion, but White probably just wanted to make a safe move without changing much before the 40th move.

37...a4 38.♖d3 ♕a5

Black is trying to annoy White a bit with the idea of playing ...axb3, axb3 and ...♕a3 somewhere.

39.♘g5 axb3 40.axb3 ♗f8

So time-trouble is successfully negotiated and it is time to think things over.

41.♕f3

The queen clearly belongs on f3.

41...♗c5 42.♘e4

The knight is well-placed on e4 too.

42...♔g7

Black keeps on waiting.

43.♘xc5

and Caruana finds nothing better than to exchange the knight. After this move we should evaluate the position as equal. Black just wanted to play ...♖fe5 and go back to controlling the e-file, which gives him enough counterplay.

43...♕xc5 44.♖d4

Can White win the f4 pawn?!

44...♔h6

Black again just waits...

45.♕d3

Of course White cannot play 45.♘xf4?? ♕e5 since the knight on f4 is lost.

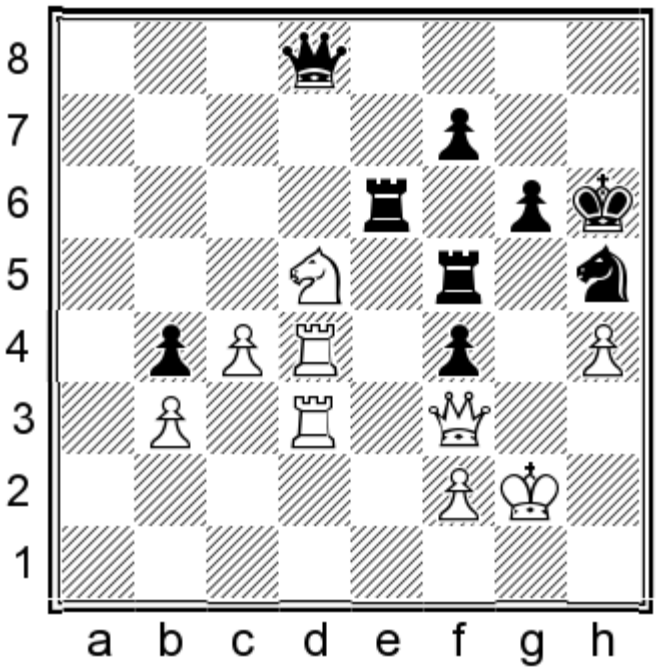
45...♔h7 46.♕f3 ♖e6

Could it be that So decided to play for a win?! Well maybe, but maybe he just liked the position of the black rook better on e6 than on e8.

47.♔g1 ♕a5 48.♔g2

Now it is Caruana who keeps on doing “nothing”.

48...♔h6 49.♖1d3 ♕d8



50.♕g4

and because neither player showed any ideas of how to improve their positions, the game ended with a draw offer. We just saw a very interesting game where White clearly missed a lot of very promising chances.

1/2